



BAPU

THE SELECTED WORKS OF  
MAHATMA GANDHI

VOLUME FOUR

[ *The Basic Works* ]

GENERAL EDITOR  
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## FOREWORD

This is the Fourth Volume of the *Selected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*. It includes almost all the basic brochures and pamphlets which were written by Gandhi during his lifetime. The brochures have been arranged in the order in which they were published.

*Ethical Religion* was written originally in Gujarati as early as 1907 in South Africa and was serialized in the *Indian Opinion*. It contains the basic ideas of Gandhi on ethics and religion. It is one of the less known publications, but, nonetheless, important for understanding Mahatma Gandhi's fundamental thought.

In his *Autobiography*, Gandhi has mentioned about the 'magic spell' of Ruskin's *Unto This Last* which he read during his twenty-four hour journey from Johannesburg to Durban in 1908. This book exercised very deep influence on Gandhi's life and work. He translated it later into Gujarati, entitling it *Sarvodaya*. Gandhi has paraphrased the teachings of *Unto This Last* as follows:

- 1 The good of the individual is contained in the good of all
- 2 A lawyer's work has the same value as the barber's, as all have the same right of earning their livelihood from their work



3. A life of labour, i.e. the life of the tiller of the soil and the handicraftsman is the life worth living.

*Hind Swaraj* or *Indian Home Rule* was first published in the columns of the *Indian Opinion* in South Africa. It was written in 1908 during Gandhiji's return voyage from London to South Africa in answer to the Indian school of violence. The new edition of *Hind Swaraj* was published in 1938. Though Gandhiji's views as expressed in the first edition remained in substance unchanged, they had gone through 'a necessary evolution'. In his Preface to the first edition, Gandhiji wrote. "In my opinion it is a book which can be put into the hands of a child. It teaches the gospel of love in place of that of hate. It replaces violence with self-sacrifice. It pits soul force against brute force."

*From Yeravda Mandir* is a collection of weekly letters by Gandhiji to the inmates of Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati, during his incarceration in 1930 in the Yeravda Central Prison, Poona. They were originally written in Gujarati. The letters explain in some detail Gandhiji's own ideas about the eleven rules of conduct to be observed by the inmates of the Ashram. They include truth, non-violence, chastity, control of the palate, non-stealing, non-possession, fearlessness, removal of untouchability, bread-labour, equality of religions, and Swadeshi.

*Discourses on the Gita* is the English rendering of Gujarati letters written by Mahatma Gandhi to the inmates of the Ashram from Yeravda Central Jail in 1930. In the course of these eighteen letters, one on each Chapter, Gandhiji has tried to explain the essence of the *Gita*'s philosophy in simple language and style. The *Gita* occupied a central place in Gandhiji's life, and recitations from it formed a regular part of his daily prayers.

*Constructive Programme Its Meaning and Place* was first published in 1941, and its revised edition in 1945. In the course of his Foreword to this brochure Gandhiji had emphasized that "constructive programme is the truthful and non-violent way of winning complete Independence." "It is designed to build up the nation from the very bottom upward." He added "Training for military revolt means learning the use of arms, ending perhaps in the atomic bomb. For civil disobedience, it means the Constructive Programme."

*Key to Health* was written by Mahatma Gandhi during his detention in the Aga Khan Palace in the course of the 1942 'Quit India' movement. It is, indeed, significant that instead of writing a book on politics Gandhiji chose to pen down his basic ideas on the promotion of health through simple 'nature cure' methods and without the use of modern medicines. Originally, Gandhiji had written on health problems in the columns of the *Indian Opinion* in South Africa.

in 1906. *Key to Health* is, however, an entirely new publication, though the fundamental ideas are, more or less, similar.

Raj Bhavan,  
Ahmedabad,  
October 2, 1968

Shriman Narayan

# THE BASIC WORKS

BY  
M K GANDHI



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# ETHICAL RELIGION



## INTRODUCTION

[Gandhiji serialized in *Indian Opinion* in its issues from 5-1-1907 to 23-2-1907 into Gujarati, *Ethical Religion* by William MacIntyre Salter, the founder of the Society for Ethical Culture, Chicago The book, one of a series issued by the Rationalist Press Association, was published in America in March 1889 and later in England in 1905 In the Gujarati series, Gandhiji summarized only eight of the fifteen chapters The English rendering of the original Gujarati is reproduced from *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol VI]

Hypocrisy has nowadays increased in the world Whatever a man's religion, he thinks only of its outward form and fails in his real duty In our crazy pursuit of wealth, we seldom think of the harm we cause, or are likely to cause, to others Women in Europe do not hesitate in the least to wear soft [kid] gloves even though these are made by killing young and tender animals It is known the world over how Mr Rockefeller, said to be the richest man in the world, violated many rules of morality in amassing his fortune It is because such conditions prevail around them that many people in Europe and America have turned against religion They argue that, if any religion worth the name existed in the world, the inordinate wickedness that is rampant all round would not be there. This is a mistaken view. As it is common for a workman to quarrel with his tools and not try to look for his own faults, so, instead of thinking of the wickedness in themselves, men brand

religion itself as humbug and go on acting and living as they please.

Observing this trend and fearing that, if all religions are destroyed, a great calamity may befall the world and people may forsake the moral path altogether, many Americans and Europeans have come forward to try, in a variety of ways, to bring the people back to that path.

A Society<sup>1</sup> has been founded which has shown, after an investigation of all religions, that not only do all of them teach morality but they are based for the most part on ethical principles; that it is one's duty to obey the laws of ethics whether or not one professes a religion; and that men who would not obey them could do no good either to themselves or to others, in this world or the next. The object of these societies is to influence those who have been led to look down upon all religions because of the prevailing hypocrisy. They find out the fundamentals of all religions, discuss and write about the ethical principles common to them and live up to them. Thus creed they call Ethical Religion. It is not among the aims of these societies to criticize any religion. Men professing all religions can, and do, join these societies. The advantage of such a society is that members adhere to their own faith more strictly and pay greater attention to its moral teaching. They firmly believe that man ought to abide by the laws of morality and that if he does not, it will mean an end

<sup>1</sup> The Society for Ethical Culture, Chicago

to all order in the world and ultimate destruction.

Mr. Salter, a learned American, has published a book on the subject, which is excellent. Though it does not deal with any religion as such, it contains teachings of universal application. We shall publish the substance of these teachings every week. All that needs to be said about the author is that he practises whatever he advises others to do. We would only appeal to the reader to try to live up to those moral precepts that appeal to him. Then only may we regard our efforts as having been fruitful.

## CHAPTER I BEGINNING

It is the moral nature of man by which he rises to good and noble thoughts. The different sciences show us the world as it is. Ethics tells us what it ought to be. It enables man to know how he should act. Man has two windows to his mind: through one he can see his own self as it is, through the other, he can see what it ought to be. It is our task to analyse and explore the body, the brain and the mind of man separately, but if we stop here, we derive no benefit despite our scientific knowledge. It is necessary to know about the evil effects of injustice, wickedness, vanity and the like, and the disaster the spell where the three are found together. And more knowledge is not enough, it should be followed by appropriate action. An ethical idea is like an architect's plan.



The plan shows how the building should be constructed; but it becomes useless if the building is not raised accordingly. Similarly, an ethical idea is useless so long as it is not followed by suitable action. There are many who memorize moral precepts and preach sermons, but they neither practise them nor do they mean to do so. There are some who believe that moral principles are not intended to be practised in this world; they are meant for the other world—the world which lies beyond death. A great thinker has said, "If you wish to attain perfection, you must begin from this very day to live according to the laws of morality at any cost." We need not be scared away by such thoughts; on the contrary we should be glad to live up to them, considering our responsibility in the matter. "Certainly, cousin," said the gallant Earl of Pembroke, on coming up to the Earl of Derby before Aubercoche and finding the battle already won, "you have neither been courteous nor behaved honourably to fight my enemies without waiting for me, seeing that you had sent for me" Only when there is such readiness to accept moral responsibility will men tread the path of virtue.

God is omnipotent, He is perfect. There are no limits to His mercy, to His goodness and to His justice. If this is so, how can we, His bond slaves, stray at all from the moral path? It is no fault of the ethical principles if one following them should fail. However, those committing a breach of morality have only themselves to blame.

In the path of morality there is no such thing as reward for moral behaviour. If a man does some good deed, he does not do it to win applause, he does it because he must. For him doing good is but a higher kind of food, if one may compare food and goodness. And if someone should give him an opportunity to do a good deed, he would feel grateful just as a starving man would be grateful to the giver of food and bless him.

This ethical religion, of which we have spoken, does not mean the cultivation of gentlemanliness. It does mean that we should become a little more diligent, a little better educated, a little cleaner and neater, etc. All this is no doubt included in it, but it touches only the fringe of ethical religion. Many more things have to be done by man if he would walk along this path, and he has to do them as a matter of duty, knowing them to be a part of his nature, not for gaining any worldly benefit.

## CHAPTER II

### IDEAL MORALITY

The current views of morality are not of a very high order. Some believe that morality is not something quite essential. Others think that there is no relation between religion and morality. But an examination of the world's religions shows that, without morality, religion cannot subsist. True morality covers religion for the most part. Anyone who observes the laws of morality for their own sake and not for any selfish end can be regarded as religious. There are men in Russia who dedicate their lives to the good of their country. Such men are truly moral. A man like Jeremy Bentham, who discovered many good principles for English legislation, tried very hard to spread education among the English and took a prominent part in improving the condition of prisoners, may be regarded as truly moral.

Besides, it is a rule of ideal morality that it is not enough to follow the trodden path. We ought to follow the path which we know to be true, whether it is familiar or unfamiliar to us. In other words, when we know a particular path to be the right one, we should set out on it without fear. We can progress only if we observe the laws of morality in this way. That is why true morality, true civilization and true progress are always to be found together.

If we examine our desires, we shall see that we

do not wish for what we have already. We always value more that which we do not have. But desires are of two kinds: one is the pursuit of mere self-interest. To attempt to fulfil this kind of desire is immoral. The other impels us constantly to improve ourselves and to do good to others. We should never become overweening with any amount of good that we may do. It is not for us to evaluate it, but rather should we have perpetual longing to become better and do more good. True morality consists in our efforts to realize such longing.

If we have no home or family of our own, that is nothing to be ashamed of. But if we have a home and abuse it, or own a business and practise fraud, we stray from the path of morality. Morality consists in doing what we ought to do. We can prove the need of morality through a few illustrations. Destruction has been the lot of peoples or families in which the seeds of immorality, such as disunity and untruth, were found. To take an example from trade and business, we do not come across a single person who will say that truth should not be followed. The effect of justice and goodness is not felt from outside, these qualities inhere in us. Four hundred years ago, much injustice and untruth prevailed in Europe, so that people could not rest in peace even for a moment. The cause of this state of affairs was that people had no morality. If we take out the essence of all moral laws, we shall find that the attempt to do good to mankind is the highest morality. If we open the

treasure-house of morality with this key, we shall find in it all the other principles

At the end of each of these articles, we print select poems bearing on morality from Gujarati or Urdu poets in the hope that all our readers will benefit from them and will also commit them to memory. We begin with an extract<sup>1</sup> from Mr. Malbari's<sup>2</sup> book, *Adami Ane Tem Duniya*

### CHAPTER III

## WHAT IS MORAL ACTION?

When can it be said that a particular action is moral? In asking this question, the intention is not to contrast moral with immoral actions, but to consider many of our everyday actions against which nothing can be said from the conventional standpoint and which some regard as moral. Most of our actions are probably non-moral; they do not necessarily involve morality. For the most part we act according to the prevailing conventions. Such conventional behaviour is often necessary. If no such rules are observed, anarchy would be the result, and society—social intercourse—would come to an end. Still the mere observance of custom and usage cannot properly be called morality.

<sup>1</sup> Not reproduced here

<sup>2</sup> B. M. Malbari, Gujarati poet and social reformer. The title of the Book is *Man and His World*

A moral act must be our own act it must spring from our own will If we act mechanically, there is no moral content in our act Such action would be moral, if we think it proper to act like a machine and do so For in doing so, we use our discrimination We should bear in mind the distinction between acting mechanically and acting intentionally It may be moral of a king to pardon a culprit But the messenger bearing the order of pardon plays only a mechanical part in the king's moral act But if the messenger were to bear the king's order, considering it to be his duty, his action would be a moral one How can a man understand morality who does not use his own intelligence and power of thought, but lets himself be swept along like a log of wood by a current? Sometimes a man defies convention and acts on his own with a view to [doing] absolute good Such a great hero was Wendell Phillips<sup>1</sup> Addressing an assembly of people, he once said, "Till you learn to form your own opinions and express them, I do not care much what you think of me" Thus when we all care only for what our conscience says, then alone can we be regarded to have stepped on to the moral road We shall not reach this stage, as long as we do not believe—and experience the belief—that God within us, the God of all, is the ever present witness to all our acts

It is not enough that an act done by us is in itself good, it should have been done with the

1 (1811-84), American orator, social reformer and abolitionist

intention to do good. That is to say, whether an act is moral or otherwise depends upon the intention of the doer. Two men may have done exactly the same thing; but the act of one may be moral, and that of the other the contrary. Take, for instance, a man who out of great pity feeds the poor and another who does the same, but with the motive of winning prestige or with some such selfish end. Though the action is the same, the act of the one is moral and that of the other non-moral. The reader here ought to remember the distinction between the two words, non-moral and immoral. It may be that we do not always see good results flowing from a moral act. While thinking of morality, all that we need to see is that the act is good and is done with a good intention. The result of an action is not within our control. God alone is the giver of fruit. Historians have called Emperor Alexander "great". Wherever he went [in the course of his conquests,] he took the Greek language and Greek culture, arts and manners, and today we enjoy the benefits of Greek civilization. But the intention of Alexander behind all this was only conquest and renown. Who can therefore say that his actions were moral? It was all right that he was termed "great", but moral he cannot be called.

These reflections prove that it is not enough for a moral act to have been done with a good intention, but it should have been done without compulsion. There is no morality whatever in my act, if I rise early out of the fear that, if I am late

for my office, I may lose my situation, Similarly there is no morality in my living a simple and unpretentious life if I have not the means to live otherwise. But plain, simple living would be moral if, though wealthy, I think of all the want and misery in the world about me—and feel that I ought to live a plain, simple life and not one of ease and luxury. Likewise it is only selfish, and not moral, of an employer to sympathize with his employees or to pay them higher wages lest they leave him. It would be moral if the employer wished well of them and treated them kindly realizing how he owed his prosperity to them. This means that for an act to be moral it has to be free from fear and compulsion. When the peasants rose in revolt and with bloodshot eyes went to King Richard II of England demanding their rights, he granted them the rights under his own seal and signature. But when the danger was over, he forced them to surrender the letters. It would be a mistake for anyone to say that King Richard's first act was moral and the second immoral. For his first act was done only out of fear and had not an iota of morality about it.

Just as a moral action should be free from fear or compulsion so should there be no self-interest behind it. This is not to say that actions prompted by self-interest are all worthless, but only that to call them moral would detract from the [dignity of the] moral idea. That honesty cannot long endure which is practised in the belief that it is the best policy. As



Shakespeare says, love born out of the profit motive is no love.<sup>1</sup>

Just as an action prompted by the motive of material gain here on earth is non-moral, so also another done for considerations of comfort and personal happiness in another world is non-moral. That action is moral which is done only for the sake of doing good. A great Christian, St Francis Xavier, passionately prayed that his mind might always remain pure.<sup>2</sup> For him devotion to God was not for enjoying a higher seat after death. He prayed because it was man's duty to pray. The great Saint Theresa wished to have a torch in her right hand and a vessel of water in her left, so that with the one she might burn the glories of heaven and with the other extinguish the fires of hell, and men might learn to serve God from love alone—without fear of hell and without temptation of heavenly bliss. To preserve morality thus demands a brave man prepared to face even death. It is cowardice to be true to

<sup>1</sup> "Love is not love,  
When it is mingled with respects that stand  
Aloof from the entire point"

<sup>2</sup> "Then why, O blessed Jesus Christ,  
Shall I not love thee well?  
Not for the sake of winning heaven,  
Or of escaping hell,  
Not with the hope of gaining aught,  
Not seeking a reward —  
But as thyself hast loved me,  
O everlasting Lord!"

friends and to break faith with enemies. Those who do good out of fear and haltingly have no moral virtue. Henry Clay, known for his kindness, sacrificed his convictions to his ambition. Daniel Webster<sup>1</sup>, for all his great intellect and his sense of the heroic and the sublime, once sold his intellectual integrity for a price. By a single mean act he wiped out all his good deeds. This shows how difficult it is to judge the morality of a man's action because we cannot penetrate the depths of his mind. We have also the answer to the question raised at the outset in this chapter: what is a moral action? Incidentally, we also saw which kind of men could live up to that morality<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> (1782-1852), American statesman and lawyer, his 'biographers insist that he was never personally dishonest'

—*Encyclopædia Britannica*

<sup>2</sup> Here follows a poem from *Kavyadohan*, an anthology of Gujarati verse, but it is not reproduced in this volume

## CHAPTER IV

### IS THERE A HIGHER LAW?

We constantly pronounce judgments upon the value of actions. Some actions satisfy us and others do not. Whether a certain act is good or bad does not depend upon whether it is beneficial or harmful to us. In judging it, we adopt quite a different standard. We have in our minds certain ideas and on the basis of those we judge the acts of others. Whether any wrong done by one to another affects us or not, we do feel it to be wrong. Sometimes, we have a trace of sympathy for the wrong-doer, but despite that sympathy, we feel no hesitation at all in pronouncing his act to be wrong. It may be that at times our judgment is found to be mistaken. We cannot always fathom a man's motives, and may thus judge him wrongly. Nevertheless, we find no difficulty in judging an act in so far as the intention is known. Even if our personal interests are sometimes served by wrong actions, we do feel inwardly that they are wrong.

Thus it is established that the rightness or wrongness of an act does not depend upon a man's self-interest. Nor does it depend upon his wishes. There is a difference between morality and sympathy. Out of sympathy for the child we wish to give it a certain thing, but if the thing is harmful to the child, we hold it immoral to give it. It is doubtless good to

show sympathy but, unrestricted by moral considerations, it turns into poison

We see also that moral laws are immutable. Opinions change, but not morality. When our eyes are open, we see the sun, when they are closed, it is not seen. The change here has been in our sense of sight, not in the fact of the sun's existence. The same holds true of moral laws. It is probable that in a state of ignorance we do not know what is moral; but once the eye of knowledge is opened, there is no difficulty in knowing it. Men rarely care to see single-mindedly the right or wrong of things, often prompted by personal considerations, they mistakenly describe the immoral as moral. The time is yet to come when men, freeing themselves from self-regarding considerations, will concentrate their attention on the ideas of morality alone. Moral culture is still in its mere infancy, it is as science was before the birth of a Bacon or a Darwin. Men were eager to know what the truth was. Instead of inquiring into morality, they have been hitherto engaged in discovering laws of nature — the laws of the earth's motion, etc. Where do we find the disinterested student of morality, patient and painstaking, who, setting aside his earlier superstitious notions, devotes his life to seeking only the ideal good? When men become as eager to explore the world of moral ideas as they are now to explore the realms of nature, we shall be able to bring together the various conceptions of morality. It is unlikely that, on ideas of morality, there will be the same

divergence of opinion as exists among men on matters of science. However, we may not for a time arrive at unanimity of opinion regarding moral laws. This does not, however, mean that it is impossible to distinguish between right and wrong.

We thus see that, independent of and apart from men's wishes and opinions, there is something like a moral standard which we may call moral law. If there are laws of the State, why may not there be a moral law too? It does not matter if that law is not committed to writing by man, and indeed it need not be. If we grant or hold that the moral law exists, it is incumbent on us to obey it, just as we ought to obey the law of the State. A moral law is distinct from and better than the laws of the State or those of business. One may ask, "How does it matter if I do not obey the laws of business and remain poor? Or if I disobey the laws of the State and incur the ruler's displeasure?" But it will never do—either for me or anyone else—to say, "What does it matter whether I tell a lie or tell the truth?"

There is thus a great difference between moral laws and temporal laws. For morality dwells in our hearts. Even a man practising immorality would admit that he has been immoral. A wrong can never become right. Even where a people is vile, though men may not observe the moral law, they would make a pretence of doing so; they thus are obliged to admit that moral laws ought to be observed. Such is the greatness of morality. It cares not for custom nor

for public opinion. To a moral man, public opinion or custom is binding only so long as it is in harmony with the moral law.

Where does this moral law come from? This law is not laid down by the State, for different laws are found in different States. Many men were opposed to the morality which Socrates observed in his day. Even so the world admits that the morality he observed has remained, and shall remain, morality for ever. Robert Browning says, 'If ever Satan proclaimed the law of hatred and untruth in the world, even then justice, goodness and truth will continue to be divine.'<sup>1</sup> One may conclude from this that the moral law is supreme and divine.

Such a law no people or individual can violate to the end of time. As has been said, even as the dangerous storm ultimately passes, immoral men must meet their destruction.<sup>2</sup>

No sooner did the cup of sin in Assyria and Babylon become full than it broke. When Rome trod the path of immorality, none of her great men could save her. The ancient Greeks were an accomplished people, still all their art and philosophy could not

<sup>1</sup> justice, good, and truth were still  
Divine, if, by some demon's will,  
Hatred and wrong had been proclaimed  
Law through the worlds, and right misnamed

*Christmas Eve, XVII*

<sup>2</sup> As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more,  
but the righteous is an everlasting foundation *Proverbs, X 25*

continue in their immorality for long. The French Revolution was but an insurrection against immorality. The same was the case with America. The good Wendell Phillips used to say that immorality even if enthroned will not endure. This mysterious moral law brings prosperity to the man who observes it: it sustains the family that obeys it, and the community which lives by it ever flourishes. Freedom, peace and happiness are the lot of the nation that lets itself be ruled by this highest law.<sup>1</sup>

#### CHAPTER V

### MORALITY AS A RELIGION

The subject of this chapter may strike one as strange. The common idea is that morality and religion are distinct things; still this chapter seeks to consider morality as a religion. Some readers may think the writer guilty of confusion. That reproach may come from two sides—from those who regard religion as more than morality, and from others who think that, where there is morality, there is no need for religion. Yet the author's intention is to show their close relationship. The societies spreading ethical religion or religious ethics believe in religion through morality.

The common idea, it may be admitted, is that there may be morality without religion and religion

<sup>1</sup> Here follows a poem from *Kavyadohan*.

without morality. One comes across many men of immoral conduct who claim to be religious in spite of the sinful acts they commit. On the other hand, there are moral men like the late Mr Bradlaugh, who are proud to call themselves atheists and would run away from the name of religion. Those who hold either of these views are mistaken. Those who hold the first view are not only mistaken, but also dangerous as they practise immorality under the guise of religion. In this chapter, therefore, we shall show that, considered intellectually and scientifically, religion and morality are united and should be so united.

Morality was in the beginning simply the customary conduct of a community, settled ways of acting that men living together naturally fell into. By a natural process the good customs tended to survive and the bad ones to die out, since, if the bad ones did not die out, they would weaken the community and lead to its extinction. Even today we see this process at work. It is neither morality nor religion if people observe good customs more or less unthinkingly. However, most of what passes for morality in the world today consists, as pointed out above, of good customs.

Moreover, men often have a merely superficial idea of religion. Sometimes men believe in religion only as a means to ward off dangers that threaten them. It would be a mistake to dignify actions as religious where they are performed out of a love that springs from fear.



But at long last a time does come when men begin to tread the path of morality consciously, deliberately with a determined will, regardless of gain or loss, of life or death, without turning to look back, ready to sacrifice themselves. Then can they be said to have been permeated with true morality.

How can such morality subsist except with the support of religion? One tells oneself, "If by doing a little harm to another, I can secure my personal interest, why should I not do that little harm?" The profit derived from doing harm is no profit, but a positive loss [to the doer]. How shall this unpalatable dose go down one's throat? Ostensibly in Germany's interest, Bismarck perpetrated dreadful deeds. Where then was his education? Where did those maxims of morality disappear which, at other times, he used to mouth before schoolchildren? Obviously, a reply to all these questions can be given. The reason why he could not keep up his morality in the face of these difficulties was that his morality was not grounded in religion. So long as the seed of morality is not watered by religion, it cannot sprout. Without water it withers and ultimately perishes. Thus it will be seen that true or ideal morality ought to include true religion. To put the same thought differently, morality cannot be observed without religion. That is to say, morality should be observed as a religion.

Furthermore, it is seen that the rules of morality, laid down in the world's great religions, are largely the same. The founders of the religions have also

explained that morality is the basis of religion. If a foundation is removed, the superstructure falls to the ground, similarly if morality is destroyed, religion which is built on it comes crashing down.

The author adds that there is nothing wrong in calling morality a religion. Dr Coit in his prayer says, "I shall have no other God except righteousness" On reflection, we shall realize that God will not help us and answer our impassioned prayer for help, if we utter His name, while having a dagger concealed under our arm. Let us take two men, one who believes in the existence of God, yet breaks all His Commandments, and another who, though not acknowledging God by name, worships Him through his deeds and obeys His laws, recognizing in the divine laws, their Maker. Which of the two men shall we call a man of religion and morality? Without a moment's thought, one would emphatically reply that the second man alone is to be considered religious and moral.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Here follows a poem by Behramji Malbari which has not been translated

## CHAPTER VI

# RELIGIOUS MORALITY OR MORAL RELIGION

Gandhiji wrote the following prefatory note to this Chapter under the caption of "Darwin's Views on Ethics"

[Before summarizing this Chapter, it is necessary to give an account first of Darwin himself. Darwin was a great Englishman of the last century who made great scientific discoveries. His memory and his power of observation were amazing. He has written some books which deserve to be read and pondered. With a mass of evidence and arguments, he has shown how man came into being, how he has evolved from a particular kind of monkey. After a large number of experiments and much sifting of evidence, he realized that there was not much difference between the anatomy of man and that of the ape. Whether this conclusion is correct or not has not much to do with ethics. Besides this, Darwin has also shown how ideas of morality affect mankind. And as many scholars have faith in Darwin's writings, our author has dealt with his views in Chapter VI.]

It is noble voluntarily to do what is good and right. The true sign of man's nobility is the fact that, instead of being driven about like a cloud before the wind, he stands firm and can do, and in fact does, what he deems proper.

Nevertheless, we ought to know the direction in which our environment disposes our instincts. We know that we are not in every way masters of our own life, there are conditions outside of us to which we have to adjust ourselves. For instance, in a country where Himalayan cold prevails, we have to put on adequate clothing, whether we like it or not, in order to keep the body warm. That is, we have to act with prudence.

The question now arises: does the influence of environment lead us to be moral? Or can it be that the forces that surround us are indifferent to morality?

At this point it becomes necessary to consider Darwin's views. Though Darwin did not write as a moral philosopher, he has shown how close the connection is between morality and environment. Those who think that morality is unimportant and that physical strength and mental capacity are the only things that matter should read Darwin. According to him, there is an instinct of self-preservation in men as in other creatures. He also says that those who survive the struggle for existence may be regarded as successful, that is, those who are unfit tend to extinction, but that the issue of the struggle does not depend on mere physical force.

Comparing man with the bear or the buffalo, we find that, in physical strength, the bear and the buffalo are superior to him, in a tussle he will surely be worsted. Nonetheless he is their superior.

by virtue of his intelligence. Similarly we can compare different races of men. In war it is not the side with the largest numbers or with the hardest soldiers that wins, but the side with the ablest generals and the best strategy, though its soldiers may be fewer or less hardy. In these examples we see the superiority of intelligence.

But Darwin shows further that moral strength is even superior to physical and intellectual strength; and we can see in various ways that a man who has moral qualities lasts longer than one who is devoid of them. Some hold that Darwin taught that strength is enough, that is, those who are physically strong ultimately survive. Superficial thinkers may believe that morality is of no use. But this is not Darwin's view at all. We find from the evidence of the early history of man that races without morality have completely disappeared. The people of Sodom and Gomorrah were extremely immoral and they are now therefore completely extinct. We can see even today how races without morality are steadily declining.

Let us now take some simple illustrations and see how at least common morality is necessary for sustaining the human race. A peaceful disposition is one element of morality. At first sight it may appear that people with a violent disposition rise in life; but a little reflection will show that, when the sword of violence falls, it may be on one's own neck. Freedom from bad habits forms another element of morality. Statistics have proved that, at the age of thirty, intemperate

persons in England are not likely to live beyond another thirteen or fourteen years, while the teetotaler's expectation of life is seventy years. Yet another element of morality is chastity. Darwin has shown that profligate persons die early. They have no children, or if they have any, they are weak. The profligate become feeble of mind, and in course of time look like idiots.

If we consider the morals of various communities, we find the same state of affairs. Among the Andaman islanders the husband looks after his wife only until their child is weaned and begins to move about, and he then abandons her. That is, they do not have the quality of altruism, and utter selfishness prevails. The result is that the race is gradually dying out. Darwin shows that the altruistic instinct is present, to some extent, even in animals. Timid birds display strength in defending their young. This shows that, if there had been no selflessness among animals, we should have in the world scarcely any life other than grass and poisonous flora. The main distinction between man and other animals is that man is more selfless than the animals. He has sacrificed his life for others in proportion to his strength, that is, for his offspring, for his family, his community and his country.

Darwin clearly shows that moral strength is supreme. The ancient Greeks had greater intelligence than the Europeans of today, but when the former gave up morality, their intelligence became their

enemy, and no trace of them remains today. Nations are sustained neither by wealth nor by armies, but by righteousness alone. It is the duty of man to bear this truth in mind and practise altruism, which is the highest form of morality.

## CHAPTER VII SOCIAL IDEAL

It is sometimes said that all morality involves social relations. This is well said; for instance, if the judge has a proper sense of justice, men who go to court obtain satisfaction. Similarly love, kindness, generosity and other qualities can be manifested only in relation to others. The force of loyalty can be demonstrated only in our relations with one another. Of patriotism, nothing need be said. Truly speaking, there is no aspect of morality the benefit of which accrues to the practitioner alone. Sometimes it is said that truthfulness and other virtues have nothing to do with the other person and are entirely personal. But we must admit that by telling the truth we prevent harm to another, just as by telling a lie and deceiving a person we do him an injury.

In the same way, when a man disapproves of certain laws or customs and withdraws from society, even then his acts affect society. Such a man lives in a world of ideals. He does not worry that the world of his ideals is not yet born. For him the mere thought that the prevailing standard is not good

enough is sufficient to impel him to resist it. He will constantly try to change other people's way of life to his own. This is how prophets have caused the world's wheels to change their course.

So long as man remains selfish and does not care for the happiness of others, he is no better than an animal and perhaps worse. His superiority to the animal is seen only when we find him caring for his family. He is still more human, that is, much higher than the animal, when he extends his concept of the family to include his country or community as well. He climbs still higher in the scale when he comes to regard the human race as his family. A man is an animal or imperfect [as a human being] to the extent that he falls behind in his service to humanity. If I feel my wife's injury or that of my community, yet have no sympathy for anyone outside the circle, it is clear that I do not have any feeling for humanity as such, but I have, simply out of selfishness or a sense of discrimination, a certain feeling for my wife, my children or the community which I hold as my own.

That is to say, we have neither practised nor known ethical religion so long as we do not feel sympathy for every human being. Now we know that the higher morality must be comprehensive; it must embrace all men. Considering our relation to mankind, every man has a claim over us, as it is our duty always to serve him. We should act on the assumption that we have no claim on others. He is merely



ignorant who would here argue that the man acting in this manner will be trampled in the world's scramble. For it is a universal experience that God always saves the man who whole-heartedly devotes himself to the service of others.

According to this moral standard all men are equal. This is not to be interpreted to mean equality of position and function for all. It only means that, if I hold a high place, I also have the ability to shoulder its duties and responsibilities I should not therefore lose my head and believe that men with smaller responsibilities are my inferiors. Equality depends on the state of our mind, and until our mind reaches that state, we shall remain backward.

According to this moral standard no nation can rule another for selfish ends. It is immoral of the American people to reduce the aborigines to an inferior status and run the government. A civilized race coming into contact with a savage one owes it to the latter to raise it to its own level. The same standard rules that the king is the servant and not the master of his people and that the officers are not there to enjoy power but to make the people happy. If the people in a democratic State are selfish, that State comes to no good.

Moreover, according to this law, the stronger members of a State or community have to protect, not oppress, the weaker ones. Under such a government there can be no starvation; nor can there be excessive accumulation of riches; for we can never be

happy while we see our neighbours languishing in misery. The man following this high moral standard will never amass wealth. He who would be moral need not be scared away by the thought that few follow this ideal morality, for he is master of his morality not of its results. He will be considered guilty if he does not practice morality, but nobody will find fault with him if his immoral behaviour has no consequences for society.

## CHAPTER VIII

## PERSONAL MORALITY

‘I am responsible for this,’ or ‘This is my duty’ this is a moving and wonderful thought. A mysterious, resounding voice seems to say, ‘To thee, individually, O man, is given this task. Whether defeat or victory, both belong to thee. Thou art what no one else in the world is, for nowhere has nature created two similar objects. Thou hast a duty which no one else in the world can do, and if thou dost not do it that loss will stand debited to thee in the world’s balance-sheet.’

‘What is that duty I owe to myself?’ Someone may quote the verse

Call not man God, for man is not God,  
Yet man is not distinct from God’s glory,

and answer, ‘My duty is to rest secure in the belief that I am a ray of God’s light.’ Another may answer

that the duty is to have sympathy and fraternal regard for others. A third may answer that it is to revere parents, care for one's wife and children, and acquit oneself well with brother, sister or friend. Alongside of all these virtues, it is also a part of my duty to respect myself even as I respect others. As long as I do not understand myself, how shall I understand others? And how shall I respect one whom I do not know? Many hold the view that the obligation of proper conduct arises [only] in relation to others and that, in the absence of contact with others, one may do just as one pleases. He who holds this view does not know what he says. In this world none can, with impunity, act as he pleases.

Let us now see what our duty is to ourselves. Let us take, first, our private habits which are unknown to all but ourselves. We are responsible for them since they affect our character; but this is not all. We are responsible for them also because they affect others. Every person ought to control his own impulses, and keep his soul as well as body clean. 'Tell me,' says a great man, 'what a man's private habits are and I shall tell you what he is or will be.' We should therefore control all our appetites, so that we do not drink or eat to excess. Else we shall lose our strength and our good name. Wordly success never comes to him who does not abstain from sensual pleasures and does not thus save his body, mind, intellect and soul.

Arguing along these lines and keeping one's

instincts pure, one should further consider how to put them to use. One ought to have a fixed aim in life. If we do not discover our life's purpose, and keep steadily to the course, we shall be swept along like a rudderless ship on the high seas, we shall falter on the [moral] path. Man's highest duty in life is to serve mankind and take his share in bettering its condition. This is true worship—true prayer. He is a godly man who does God's work. Hypocrites and cheats going about invoking God's name are legion. Because a patriot utters the name of God, no one would call it godly. Contribution to an ideal order of human life is something everyone can aim at. With this aim in view the mother may legitimately rear her child, the lawyer may pursue his profession, the merchant may carry on his business or trade and the working man may labour. A person with that fixed aim would never deviate from the path of morality, for if he did, he could not fulfil his aim of uplifting mankind.

Let us consider the matter in some detail. We ought constantly to examine whether our way of life tends to improve human life or to worsen it. Thus the merchant should ask himself whether, in transacting a business, he is cheating himself or another. The lawyer and the physician, acting according to this standard, will give more thought to their client or patient than to their fees. The mother in rearing her child would proceed very cautiously lest she should spoil the child out of misguided love or some selfish

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interest. The worker too would be guided by these considerations and do his duty. The result of all this would be that, if the worker fulfils his function in conformity with the moral ideal, he would be deemed better and higher than the wealthy merchant, physician or lawyer who lives without any discipline. The worker would be the true coin and those selfish men, even though more intelligent or wealthy, would be counterfeit. This further shows that any man, whatever his place in life, has the power to fulfil this aim. A man's value depends upon his way of life, not his status. One's way of life is not to be judged by one's visible outward actions, but by one's inner leanings. For instance, if of two men, one gives a dollar to a poor person to rid himself of his presence and the other half a dollar but with love and out of compassion for the man, obviously, the one who gave half a dollar is truly moral, while the other who gave a dollar, the sinner.

To sum up, he alone is religious, he alone is happy and he alone is wealthy, who is sincere in himself, bears no malice, exploits no one and always acts with a pure mind. Such men alone can serve mankind. How can a damp matchstick kindle a log of wood? How can a man who does not practise morality teach it to another? How can a sinking man save another from drowning? The man who lives a moral life never raises the question as to how to serve the world, for he is never in doubt. Matthew Arnold says of a friend:

I saw him sensitive in frame,  
I knew his spirits low,  
And wished him health, success, and fame—  
I do not wish it now  
For these are all their own reward,  
And leave no good behind  
They try us—oftenest make us hard,  
Less modest, pure, and kind

Time was when Arnold wished his friend health, success and fame. But he did not so wish now, because his friend's happiness or misery did not depend on their presence or absence, he therefore only wished that his morality might ever endure. Emerson says, "Adversity is the prosperity of the great" Both the money and the fame belonging to the base are a misery to them and to the world<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Here follows an Urdu poem by Nazir in Gujarati transliteration



UNTO THIS LAST : a paraphrase





## TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

In a chapter in his *Autobiography* (Part IV, Chapter XVIII) entitled 'The Magic Spell of a Book' Gandhiji tells us how he read Ruskin's *Unto This Last* on the twenty-four hours' journey from Johannesburg to Durban 'The train reached there in the evening I could not get any sleep that night I determined to change my life in accordance with the ideals of the book . I translated it later into Gujarati, entitling it *Sarvodaya*'

*Sarvodaya* is here re-translated into English, Ruskin's winged words being retained as far as possible

At the end of that chapter Gandhiji gives us a summary of the teachings of *Unto This Last* as he understood it.

1 The good of the individual is contained in the good of all

2 A lawyer's work has the same value as the barber's, as all have the same right of earning their livelihood from their work.

3 A life of labour, i.e. the life of the tiller of the soil and the handicraftsman is the life worth living

Nothing more need be said as regards the paraphrase of Ruskin's four chapters, but Gandhiji's conclusion (pp 77-80), written as it was in South

Africa long before he returned to India in 1915, is prophetic and fit to be treasured by India for all time to come. And the last paragraph of the booklet is a pearl beyond price.

V. G. D.

2007, *Bhadra vadi* 5

[SECOND EDITION]

This is a reprint of the first edition except for a few verbal alterations suggested by my friend Shri Verner Elwin who was good enough to go through the translation at my request.

V. G. D.

*Vasantapanchami*, 2012





JOHN RUSKIN (1865)

## INTRODUCTION

People in the West generally hold that the whole duty of man is to promote the happiness of the majority of mankind, and happiness is supposed to mean only physical happiness and economic prosperity. If the laws of morality are broken in the conquest of this happiness, it does not matter very much. Again, as the object sought to be attained is the happiness of the majority, Westerners do not think there is any harm if this is secured by sacrificing a minority. The consequences of this line of thinking are writ large on the face of Europe.

This exclusive search for physical and economic well-being prosecuted in disregard of morality is contrary to divine law, as some wise men in the West have shown. One of these was John Ruskin who contends in *Unto This Last* that men can be happy only if they obey the moral law.

We in India are very much given nowadays to an imitation of the West. It is necessary to imitate the virtues of the West, but there is no doubt that Western standards are often bad, and every one will agree that we should shun all evil things.

The Indians in South Africa are reduced to a sorry plight. We go abroad in order to make money, and in trying to get rich quick, we lose sight of morality and forget that God will judge all our acts. Self-interest absorbs our energies and paralyzes our power.

of discrimination between good and evil. The result is that instead of gaining anything, we lose a great deal by staying in foreign countries; or at least we fail to derive full benefit from it. Morality is an essential ingredient in all the faiths of the world, but apart from religion, our commonsense indicates the necessity of observing the moral law. Only by observing it can we hope to be happy, as Ruskin shows in the following pages

Socrates in Plato's *Apology*<sup>1</sup> gives us some idea of our duty as men. And he was as good as his word. I feel that Ruskin's *Unto This Last* is an expansion of Socrates' ideas, he tells us how men in various walks of life should behave if they intend to translate these ideas into action. What follows is not a translation of *Unto This Last* but a paraphrase, as a translation would not be particularly useful to the readers of *Indian Opinion*. Even the title has not been translated but paraphrased as *Sarvodaya* [the welfare of all], as that was what Ruskin aimed at in writing this book.

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji had published a summary of *The Apology* in *Indian Opinion* before *Sarvodaya* was written. V. G. D.

# THE ROOTS OF TRUTH

Among the delusions which at different periods have afflicted mankind, perhaps the greatest—certainly the least creditable—is modern economics based on the idea that an advantageous code of action may be determined irrespectively of the influence of social affection

Of course, as in the case of other delusions, political economy has a plausible idea at the root of it ‘The social affections,’ says the economist, ‘are accidental and disturbing elements in human nature, but avarice and the desire for progress are constant elements Let us eliminate the inconstants, and considering man merely as a money-making machine, examine by what laws of labour, purchase and sale, the greatest amount of wealth can be accumulated Those laws once determined, it will be for each individual afterwards to introduce as much of the disturbing affectionate element as he chooses ’

This would be a logical method of analysis if the accidentals afterwards to be introduced were of the same nature as the powers first examined Supposing a body in motion to be influenced by constant and inconstant forces, it is the simplest way of examining its course to trace it first under the persistent conditions and afterwards introduce the causes of variation But the disturbing elements in the social problem



are not of the same nature as the constant ones; they alter the essence of the creature under examination the moment they are added. They operate not mathematically but chemically, introducing conditions which render all our previous knowledge unavailable.

I do not doubt the conclusions of the science if its terms are accepted. I am simply uninterested in them, as I should be in those of a science of gymnastics which assumed that men had no skeletons. It might be shown on that supposition that it would be advantageous to roll the students up into pellets, flatten them into cakes, or stretch them into cables; and that when these results were effected, the reinsertion of the skeleton would be attended with various inconveniences to their constitution. The reasoning might be admirable, the conclusions true, and the science deficient only in applicability. Modern political economy stands on a precisely similar basis. It imagines that man has a body but no soul to be taken into account and frames its laws accordingly. How can such laws possibly apply to man in whom the soul is the predominant element?

Political economy is no science at all. We see how helpless it is when labourers go on a strike. The masters take one view of the matter, the operatives another; and no political economy can set them at one. Disputant after disputant vainly strives to show that the interests of the masters are not antagonistic to those of the men. In fact it does not always

follow that the persons must be antagonistic because their interests are. If there is only a crust of bread in the house, and mother and children are starving, their interests are not the same. If the mother eats it, the children want it; if the children eat it, the mother must go hungry to her work. Yet it does not follow that there is antagonism between them, that they will fight for the crust, and the mother, being strongest, will get it and eat it. Similarly it cannot be assumed that because their interests are diverse, persons must regard one another with hostility and use violence or cunning to obtain the advantage.

Even if we consider men as actuated by no other moral influences than those which affect rats or swine, it can never be shown generally either that the interests of master and labourer are alike or that they are opposed; for according to circumstances they may be either. It is indeed the interest of both that the work should be rightly done and a just price obtained for it, but in the division of profits, the gain of the one may or may not be the loss of the other. It is not the master's interest to pay wages so low as to leave the men sickly and depressed, nor the workman's interest to be paid high wages if the smallness of the master's profit hinders him from conducting it in a safe and liberal way. A stoker ought not to desire high pay if the company is too poor to keep the engine-wheels in repair.

All endeavour, therefore, to deduce rules of action from balance of expediency is in vain. And it is

meant to be in vain. For no human actions ever were intended by the Maker of men to be guided by balances of expediency but by balances of justice. He has therefore rendered all endeavours to determine expediency futile for evermore. No man can know what will be the ultimate result to himself or others of any given line of conduct. But every man may know and most of us do know what is a just and an unjust act. And all of us may know also that the consequences of justice will be ultimately the best possible, both to others and ourselves, though we can neither say what *is* best, or how it is likely to come about.

I have meant in the term justice to include affection—such affection as one man *owes* to another. All right relations between master and operative ultimately depend on this.

As an illustration let us consider the position of domestic servants.

We will suppose that the master of a household tries only to get as much work out of his servants as he can, at the rate of wages he gives. He never allows them to be idle, feeds them as poorly and lodges them as ill as they will endure. In doing this, there is no violation on his part of what is commonly called 'justice'. He agrees with the domestic for his whole time and service and takes them, the limits of hardship in treatment being fixed by the practice of other masters in the neighbourhood. If the servant can get a better place, he is free to take one.

This is the politico-economical view of the case according to the doctors of that science who assert that by this procedure the greatest average of work will be obtained from the servant, and therefore the greatest benefit to the community, and through the community, to the servant himself

That however is not so It would be so if the servant were an engine of which the motive power was steam, magnetism or some such agent of calculable force But on the contrary he is an engine whose motive power is the Soul Soul force enters into all the economist's equations without his knowledge and falsifies every one of their results The largest quantity of work will not be done by this curious engine for pay or under pressure. It will be done when the motive force, that is to say, the will or spirit of the creature, is brought to its greatest strength by its own proper fuel, namely by the affections

It does happen often that if the master is a man of sense and energy, much material work may be done under pressure, also it does happen often that if the master is indolent and weak, a small quantity of work, and that bad, may be produced by his servant But the universal law of the matter is that, assuming any given quantity of energy and sense in master and servant, the greatest material result obtainable by them will be not through antagonism to each other, but through affection for each other

Nor is this one whit less generally true because indulgence will be frequently abused, and kindness

met with ingratitude. For the servant who, gently treated, is ungrateful, treated ungently, will be revengeful; and the man who is dishonest to a liberal master will be injurious to an unjust man.

In any case and with any person, this unselfish treatment will produce the most effective return. I am here considering the affections wholly as a motive power; not at all as things in themselves desirable or noble. I look at them simply as an anomalous force, rendering every one of the ordinary economist's calculations nugatory. The affections only become a true motive power when they ignore every other motive and condition of economics. Treat the servant kindly with the idea of turning his gratitude to account, and you will get, as you deserve, no gratitude nor any value for your kindness; but treat him kindly without any economical purpose, and all economical purposes will be answered; here as elsewhere whoever will save his life shall lose it, whoso loses it shall find it.

The next simplest example of relation between master and operative is that which exists between the commander of a regiment and his men.

Supposing the officer only desires to apply the rules of discipline so as, with least trouble to himself, to make the regiment most effective, he will not be able, by any rules, on this selfish principle, to develop the full strength of his subordinates. But if he has the most direct personal relations with his men, the most care for their interests, and the most value for their lives, he will develop their effective strength,

through their affection for his own person and trust in his character, to a degree wholly unattainable by other means. This applies more stringently as the numbers concerned are larger: a charge may often be successful though the men dislike their officers, a battle has rarely been won, unless they loved their general.

A body of men associated for the purposes of robbery (as a Highland clan in ancient times) shall be animated by perfect affection, and every member of it be ready to lay down his life for the life of his chief. But a band of men associated for purposes of legal production is usually animated by no such emotions, and none of them is willing to give his life for the life of his chief. For a servant or a soldier is engaged at a definite rate of wages for a definite period, but a workman at a rate of wages variable according to the demand for labour, and with the risk of being at any time thrown out of employment by changes of trade. Now as under these conditions no action of the affections can take place, but only an explosive action of *disaffections*, two points offer themselves for consideration in the matter.

- 1 How far the rate of wages may be so regulated as not to vary with the demand for labour;

- 2 How far it is possible that bodies of workmen may be engaged and maintained at such fixed rate of wages (whatever the state of trade may be), without enlarging or diminishing their number, so as to give them permanent interest in the establishment

with which they are connected, like that of the domestic servants in an old family, or an *esprit de corps*, like that of the soldiers in a crack regiment.

1. A curious fact in the history of human error is the denial by the economist of the possibility of so regulating wages as not to vary with the demand for labour.

We do not sell our prime-minister by Dutch auction. Sick, we do not inquire for a physician who takes less than a guinea; litigious, we never think of reducing six-and-eightpence to four-and-sixpence; caught in a shower we do not canvass the cabmen to find one who values his driving at less than sixpence a mile.

The best labour always has been, and is, as *all* labour ought to be, paid by an invariable standard.

'What!' the reader perhaps answers amazedly: 'to pay good and bad workmen alike?'

Certainly. You pay with equal fee, contentedly, the good and bad preachers (workmen upon your soul) and the good and bad physicians (workmen upon your body), much more may you pay, contentedly, with equal fees, the good and bad workmen upon your house.

'Nay, but I choose my physician, thus indicating my sense of the quality of their work' By all means choose your bricklayer, that is the proper reward of the good workman, to be 'chosen'. The right system respecting all labour is, that it should be paid at a fixed rate, but the good workman employed,

and the bad workman unemployed The false system is when the bad workman is allowed to offer his work at half-price, and either take the place of the good or to force him by his competition to work for an inadequate sum

2 This equality of wages, then, being the first object towards which we have to discover the road, the second is that of maintaining constant numbers of workmen in employment, whatever may be the accidental demand for the article they produce

The wages which enable any workman to live are necessarily higher if his work is liable to intermission, than if it is assured and continuous In the latter case he will take low wages in the form of a fixed salary The provision of regular labour for the workman is good for him as well as for his master in the long run, although he cannot then make large profits or take big risks or indulge in gambling

The soldier is ready to lay down his life for his chief and therefore he is held in greater honour than an ordinary workman Really speaking, the soldier's trade is not slaying, but being slain in the defence of others The reason the world honours the soldier is, because he holds his life at the service of the State

Not less is the respect we pay to the lawyer, physician and clergyman, founded ultimately on their self-sacrifice Set in a judge's seat, the lawyer will strive to judge justly, come of it what may The physician will treat his patients with care, no matter under what difficulties The clergyman will similarly

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5.4



instruct his congregation and direct it to the right path.

All the efficient members of these so-called learned professions are in public estimate of honour preferred before the head of a commercial firm, as the merchant is presumed to act always selfishly. His work may be very necessary to the community; but the motive of it is understood to be wholly personal. *The merchant's first object in all his dealings must be (the public believe) to get as much for himself and leave as little to his customer as possible* Enforcing this upon him, by political statute, as the necessary principle of his action; recommending it to him, and themselves reciprocally adopting it, proclaiming for law of the universe that a buyer's function is to cheapen, and a seller's to cheat,—the public, nevertheless, involuntarily condemn the man of commerce for his compliance with their own statement, and stamp him for ever as belonging to an inferior grade of human personality.

This they must give up doing. They will have to discover a kind of commerce which is not exclusively selfish. Or rather they must discover that there never was or can be any other kind of commerce, and that this which they have called commerce was not commerce at all but cozening. In true commerce, as in true preaching or true fighting, it is necessary to admit the idea of occasional voluntary loss;—that sixpences have to be lost, as well as lives, under a sense of duty; that the market may have its martyrdoms

is well as the pulpit; and trade its heroism, as well as war.

Five great intellectual professions exist in every civilized nation:

The Soldier's profession is to *defend* it

The Pastor's to *teach* it

The Physician's to *keep* it in health

The Lawyer's to *enforce* justice in it

The Merchant's to *provide* for it

And the duty of all these men is on due occasion to die for it. For truly the man who does not know when to die does not know how to live.

Observe, the merchant's function is to provide for the nation. It is no more his function to get profit for himself out of that provision than it is a clergyman's function to get his stipend. This stipend is a necessary adjunct but not the object of his life if he be a true clergyman, any more than his fee (or honorarium) is the object of life to a true physician. Neither is his fee the object of life to a true merchant. All three, if true men, have a work to be done irrespective of fee—to be done even at any cost, or for quite the contrary of fee, the pastor's function being to teach, the physician's to heal and the merchant's to provide. That is to say, he has to apply all his sagacity and energy to the producing the thing he deals in in perfect state and distributing it at the cheapest possible price where it is most needed.

And because the production of any commodity involves the agency of many lives and hands, the

merchant becomes in the course of his business the master and governor of large masses of men in a more direct way than a military officer or pastor, so that on him falls, in great part, the responsibility for the kind of life they lead; and it becomes his duty not only to produce goods in the purest and cheapest forms, but also to make the various employments involved in the production most beneficial to the men employed.

And as into these two functions, requiring for their right exercise the highest intelligence as well as patience, kindness and tact, the merchant is bound to put all his energy, so for their just discharge he is bound, as soldier or physician is bound, to give up, if need be, his life, in such way as it may be demanded of him

Two main points he has to maintain: first his engagements; and secondly the perfectness and purity of the thing provided by him; so that rather than fail in any engagement or consent to any deterioration, adulteration, or unjust or exorbitant price of that which he provides, he is bound to meet fearlessly any form of distress, poverty or labour which may through maintenance of these points come upon him.

Again in his office as governor of the men employed by him, the merchant is invested with a paternal authority and responsibility. In most cases a youth entering a commercial establishment is withdrawn altogether from home influence, his master must become his father, else he has, for practical and constant help, no father at hand. So that the only

means which the master has of doing justice to the men employed by him is to ask himself sternly whether he is dealing with such subordinate as he would with his own son, if compelled by circumstances to take such a position

Supposing the captain of a frigate were obliged to place his own son in the position of a common sailor, as he would then treat his son, he is bound always to treat every one of the men under him. So also supposing the master of a factory were obliged to place his own son in the position of an ordinary workman, as he would then treat his son, he is bound always to treat every one of his men. This is the only effective, true or practical Rule which can be given on this point of economics

And as the captain of a ship is bound to be the last man to leave his ship in case of wreck and to share his last crust with the sailors in case of famine, so the manufacturer, in any commercial crisis, is bound to take the suffering of it with his men, and even to take more of it for himself than he allows his men to feel, as a father would in a famine, shipwreck or battle sacrifice himself for his son

All this sounds very strange, the only real strangeness in the matter being, nevertheless, that it should so sound. For all this is true everlastingly and practically; all other doctrine than this being impossible in practice, consistently with any progressive state of national life, all the life which we now possess as a nation showing itself in the denial by a few strong

minds and faithful hearts of the economic principles taught to our multitudes, which principles, so far as accepted, lead straight to national destruction. Respecting the modes and forms of destruction to which they lead I hope to reason farther in a following paper.

## ESSAY II

## THE VEINS OF WEALTH

The answer which would be made by any ordinary economist to the statement in the preceding paper, is in a few words as follows .

“It is true that certain advantages of a general nature may be obtained by the development of social affections. But economists never take such advantages into consideration. Our science is simply the science of getting rich. So far from being fallacious, it is found by experience to be practically effective. Persons who follow its precepts do become rich, and persons who disobey them become poor. Every capitalist of Europe has acquired his fortune by following the laws of our science. It is vain to bring forward tricks of logic against the force of accomplished facts. Every man of business knows by experience how money is made and how it is lost.”

Pardon me. Men of business do indeed make money, but they do not know if they make it by fair means or if their money-making contributes to national welfare. They rarely know the meaning of the

word 'rich' At least if they know, they do not allow for the fact that it is a relative word, implying its opposite 'poor' as positively as the word 'north' implies its opposite 'south' Men write as if it were possible, by following certain scientific precepts, for everybody to be rich Whereas riches are a power like that of electricity, acting only through inequalities or negations of itself The force of the guinea you have in your pocket depends wholly on the default of a guinea in your neighbour's pocket If he did not want it, it would be of no use to you, the degree of power it possesses depends accurately upon the need he has for it, and the art of making yourself rich, in the ordinary mercantile economist's sense, is therefore equally and necessarily the art of keeping your neighbour poor

I wish the reader clearly to understand the difference between the two economies, to which the terms, 'political' and 'mercantile' might be attached

Political economy consists simply in the production, preservation and distribution, at fittest time and place, of useful or pleasurable things The farmer who cuts his hay at the right time; the builder who lays good bricks in well-tempered mortar, the housewife who takes care of her furniture in the parlour and guards against all waste in her kitchen are all political economists in the true and final sense, adding continually to the riches and well-being of the nation to which they belong

But mercantile economy signifies the accumulation, in the hands of individuals, of legal claim

upon, or power over, the labour of others, every such claim implying precisely as much poverty or debt on one side as it implies riches or right on the other.

The idea of riches among active men in civilized nations generally refers to such commercial wealth, and in estimating their possessions, they rather calculate the value of their horses and fields by the number of guineas they could get for them, than the value of their guineas by the number of horses and fields they could buy with them.

Real property is of little use to its owner, unless together with it he has commercial power over labour. Thus suppose a man has a large estate of fruitful land with rich beds of gold in its gravel; countless herds of cattle, houses, and gardens and store-houses; but suppose, after all, that he could get no servants? In order that he may be able to have servants, some one in his neighbourhood must be poor and in want of his gold or his corn. Assume that no one is in want of either, and that no servants are to be had. He must therefore bake his own bread, make his own clothes, plough his own ground and shepherd his own flocks. His gold will be as useful to him as any other yellow pebbles on his estate. His stores must rot, for he cannot consume them. He can eat no more than another man could eat, and wear no more than another man could wear. He must lead a life of severe and common labour to procure even ordinary comforts.

The most covetous of mankind would, with small exultation, I presume, accept riches of this kind on these terms. What is really desired, under the name of riches is, essentially, power over men, in its simplest sense, the power of obtaining for our own advantage the labour of servant, tradesman and artist. And this power of wealth of course is greater or less in direct proportion to the poverty of the men over whom it is exercised and in inverse proportion to the number of persons who are as rich as ourselves, and who are ready to give the same price for an article of which the supply is limited. If the musician is poor, he will sing for small pay, as long as there is only one person who can pay him, but if there be two or three, he will sing for the one who offers him most. So that the art of becoming 'rich' in the common sense is not only the art of accumulating much money for ourselves but also of contriving that our neighbours shall have less. In accurate terms it is 'the art of establishing the maximum inequality in our own favour'

The rash and absurd assumption that such inequalities are necessarily advantageous lies at the root of most of the popular fallacies on the subject of economics. For the beneficialness of the inequality depends first, on the methods by which it was accomplished and secondly, on the purposes to which it is applied. Inequalities of wealth, unjustly established, have assuredly injured the nation in which they exist during their establishment, and unjustly directed, injure it yet more during their existence. But



inequalities of wealth, justly established, benefit the nation in the course of their establishment; and nobly used, aid it yet more by their existence.

Thus the circulation of wealth in a nation resembles that of the blood in the natural body. There is one quickness of the current which comes of cheerful emotion or wholesome exercise; and another which comes of shame or of fever. There is a flush of the body which is full of warmth and life; and another which will pass into putrefaction.

Again even as diseased local determination of the blood involves depression of the general health of the system, all morbid local action of riches will be found ultimately to involve a weakening of the resources of the body politic.

Suppose two sailors cast away on an uninhabited coast and obliged to maintain themselves there by their own labour for a series of years

If they both kept their health, and worked steadily and in amity with each other, they might build themselves a house and in time to come possess some cultivated land together with various stores laid up for future use. All these things would be real riches or property; and supposing the men both to have worked equally hard, they would each have right to equal share or use of it. Their political economy would consist merely in the careful preservation and just division of these possessions.

Perhaps however after some time one or other might be dissatisfied with the results of their common

farming; and they might in consequence agree to divide the land into equal shares, so that each might thenceforward work in his own field and live by it. Suppose that after this arrangement had been made, one of them were to fall ill, and be unable to work on his land at a critical time—say of sowing or harvest. He would naturally ask the other to sow or reap for him.

Then his companion might say, with perfect justice, 'I will do this additional work for you, but if I do it, you must promise to do as much for me at another time. I will count how many hours I spend on your ground, and you shall give me a written promise to work for the same number of hours on mine, whenever I need your help, and you are able to give it.'

Suppose the disabled man's sickness to continue, and that under various circumstances, for several years, requiring the help of the other, he on each occasion gave a written pledge to work, as soon as he was able, at his companion's orders, for the same number of hours as the other had given up to him.

What will the positions of the two men be when the invalid is able to resume work?

Considered as a 'polis' or state, they will be poorer than they would have been otherwise, poorer by the withdrawal of what the sick man's labour would have produced in the interval. His friend may perhaps have toiled with an energy quickened by the enlarged need, but in the end his own land must have suffered

by the withdrawal of so much of his time from it; and the united property of the two men will be less than it would have been if both had remained in health and activity.

But the relations in which they stand to each other are also widely altered. The sick man has not only pledged his labour for some years, but will have exhausted his share of the stores, and will be in consequence for some time dependent on the other for food, for which he can only 'pay' him by yet more deeply pledging his own labour.

Supposing the written promises to be held entirely valid, the person who had hitherto worked for both might now, if he chose, rest altogether, and pass his time in idleness, not only forcing his companion to redeem all his previous pledges but exacting from him pledges for further labour, to an arbitrary amount, for what food he had to advance to him.

There might not be the least illegality (in the ordinary sense of the word) in the arrangement, but if a stranger arrived on the coast at this advanced stage of their political economy, he would find one man commercially Rich, the other commercially Poor. He would see, with no small surprise, one passing his days in idleness, the other labouring for both and living sparely, in the hope of recovering his independence at some distant period.

What I want the reader to note especially is the fact that the establishment of the mercantile wealth which consists in a claim upon labour signifies

a political diminution of the real wealth which consists in substantial possessions

Take another example, more consistent with the ordinary course of affairs of trade. Suppose that three men, instead of two, formed the little isolated republic, and were obliged to separate, in order to farm different pieces of land at some distance from each other each estate furnishing a distinct kind of produce and each in need of the material raised on the other. Suppose that the third man, in order to save the time of all three, simply superintends the transference of commodities from one farm to the other, on condition of receiving a share of every parcel of goods conveyed

If this carrier always brings to each estate, from the other, what is chiefly wanted, at the right time, the operations of the two farmers will prosper, and the largest possible result in produce or wealth will be attained by the little community. But suppose no intercourse between the landowners is possible, except through the travelling agent, and that after a time, this agent keeps back the articles with which he has been entrusted until there comes a period of extreme necessity for them, on one side or other, and then exacts in exchange for them all that the distressed farmer can spare of other kinds of produce, it is easy to see that by ingeniously watching his opportunities, he might possess himself of the greater part of the surplus produce of the two estates, and at last, in a year of scarcity, purchase both for himself and

maintain the former proprietors thenceforward as his labourers or servants.

This would be a case of commercial wealth acquired on the exactest principles of modern political economy. But it is clear in this instance also that the wealth of the State or of the three men considered as a society, is collectively less than it would have been if the merchant had been content with juster profit. The operations of the two farmers have been cramped to the utmost, the limitations of the supply of things they wanted at critical times, together with the failure of courage consequent on the prolongation of a struggle for mere existence, must have diminished the effective results of their labour, and the stores accumulated by the merchant will not be of equivalent value to those which, had he been honest, would have filled the granaries of the farmers and his own.

The question, therefore, respecting not only the advantage but even the quantity of national wealth, resolves itself finally into one of abstract justice. The real value of acquired wealth depends on the moral sign attached to it, just as sternly as that of a mathematical quantity depends on the algebraical sign attached to it. Any given accumulation of commercial wealth may be indicative, on the one hand, of faithful industries, progressive energies and productive ingenuities, or on the other hand, it may be indicative of mortal luxury, merciless tyranny, ruinous chicanery.

And these are not merely moral attributes of riches, which the seeker of riches may, if he chooses, despise, they are literally material attributes of riches, depreciating or exalting the monetary signification of the sum in question. One mass of money is the outcome of action which has created,—another, of action which has annihilated,—ten times as much in the gathering of it.

Therefore the idea that directions can be given for the gaining of wealth, irrespectively of the consideration of its moral sources is perhaps the most insolently futile of all that ever beguiled men through their vices. So far as I know, there is not in history record of anything so disgraceful to the human intellect as the modern idea that the commercial text 'Buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest' represents an available principle of national economy. Buy in the cheapest market?—yes; but what made your market cheap? Charcoal may be cheap among your roof timbers after a fire and bricks may be cheap in your streets after an earthquake, but fire and earthquake may not therefore be national benefits. Sell in the dearest?—yes, truly, but what made your market dear? You sold your bread well today was it to a dying man who gave his last coin for it and will never need bread more, or to a rich man who tomorrow will buy your farm over your head; or to a soldier on his way to pillage the bank in which you have put your fortune?

None of these things you can know. One thing

only you can know, namely whether this dealing of yours is a just and faithful one, which is all you need concern yourself about respecting it, sure thus to have done your part in bringing about ultimately in the world a state of things which will not issue in pillage or in death

It has been shown that the chief value of money consists in its having power over human beings, that without this power large material possessions are useless, and to a person possessing such power, comparatively unnecessary. But power over human beings is attainable by other means than by money

In this moral power there is a monetary value as real as that represented by more ponderous currencies. A man's hand may be full of invisible gold, and the wave of it or the grasp shall do more than another's with a shower of bullion

But farther. Since the essence of wealth consists in its authority over men, if the apparent wealth fail in this power, it ceases to be wealth at all. It does not appear lately in England that our authority over men is absolute.

Finally since the essence of wealth consists in power over men, will it not follow that the nobler and the more in number the persons are over whom it has power, the greater the wealth? Perhaps it may even appear after some consideration that the persons themselves *are* the wealth, not gold and silver. The true veins of wealth are purple—and not in Rock but in Flesh. The final consummation of all wealth is in

the producing as many as possible full-breathed, bright-eyed and happy-hearted human beings. In some far-away and yet undreamt-of hour I can even imagine that instead of adorning the turbans of her slaves with diamonds from Golkonda and thus showing off her material wealth, England, as a Christian mother, may at last attain to the virtues and the treasures of a non-Christian one and be able to lead forth her Sons, saying,

“These are MY Jewels ”

### ESSAY III

## EVEN-HANDED JUSTICE

Some centuries before the Christian era, a Jew merchant, reported to have made one of the largest fortunes of his time (held also in repute for much practical sagacity), left among his ledgers some general maxims which have been preserved even to our own days. They were held in respect by the Venetians who placed a statue of the old Jew on the angle of one of their principal buildings. Of late years these writings have fallen into disrepute, being opposed to the spirit of modern commerce.

He says for instance in one place ‘The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death’, adding in another, with the same meaning ‘Treasures of wickedness profit nothing, but truth delivers from death.’ Both these passages are notable for their assertions of death as



the only real issue and sum of attainment by any unjust scheme of wealth. If we read instead of 'lying tongue,' 'lying label, title, pretence or advertisement,' we shall more clearly perceive the bearing of these words on modern business.

Again the wise man says. 'He that oppresseth the poor to increase his riches shall surely <sup>2</sup>come to want.' And again more strongly. 'Rob not the poor because he is poor, neither oppress the afflicted in the place of business. For God shall spoil the soul of those that spoiled them.'

This 'robbing the poor because he is poor' is especially the mercantile form of theft, consisting in taking advantage of a man's necessities in order to obtain his labour or property at a reduced price. The ordinary highwayman robs the rich, but the trader robs the poor.

But the two most remarkable passages are the following:

'The rich and the poor have met  
God is their maker.'

'The rich and the poor have met  
God is their light'

They 'have met' That is to say, as long as the world lasts the action and counteraction of wealth and poverty is just as appointed a law of the world as the flow of stream to sea. 'God is their maker' But also this action may be either gentle and just, or convulsive and destructive; it may be by rage of devouring flood or by lapse of serviceable wave. And

which of these it shall be, depends on both rich and poor knowing that God is their light

The flowing of streams is in one respect a perfect image of the action of wealth. Where the land falls the water flows. So wealth must go where it is required. But the disposition and administration of rivers can be altered by human forethought. Whether the stream shall be a curse or a blessing depends upon man's labour and administering intelligence. For centuries districts of the world, rich in soil and favoured in climate, have lain desert under the rage of their own rivers, not only desert, but plague-struck. The stream which, rightly directed, would have flowed in soft irrigation from field to field—would have purified the air, given food to man and beast, and carried their burdens for them on its bosom—now overwhelms the plain and poisons the wind, its breath pestilence, and its work famine. In like manner human laws can guide the flow of wealth. This the leading trench and limiting mound can do so thoroughly that it shall become water of life—the riches of the hand of wisdom, or on the contrary, by leaving it to its own lawless flow, they may make it the last and deadliest of national plagues—water of Marah—the water which feeds the roots of all evil.

The necessity of these laws of distribution or restraint is curiously overlooked in the ordinary economist's definition of his own 'science'. He calls it the 'science of getting rich'. But there are many sciences as well as many arts of getting rich. Poisoning

people of large estates was one employed largely in the middle ages, adulteration of food of people of small estates is one employed largely now. All these come under the general head of sciences or arts of getting rich.

So the economist in calling his science the science of getting rich must attach some ideas of limitation to its character. Let us assume that he means his science to be the science of 'getting rich by legal or just means'. In this definition is the word 'just' or 'legal' finally to stand? For it is possible that proceedings may be legal which are by no means just. If therefore we leave at last only the word 'just' in that place of our definition, it follows that in order to grow rich scientifically, we must grow rich justly, and therefore know what is just. It is the privilege of the fishes, as it is of rats, and wolves, to live by the laws of demand and supply, but it is the distinction of humanity to live by those of right.

We have to examine then what are the laws of justice respecting payment of labour.

Money payment, as stated in my last paper, consists radically in a promise to some person working for us, that for the time and labour he spends in our service today we will give or procure equivalent time and labour in his service at any future time when he may demand it.

If we promise to give him less labour than he has given us, we under-pay him. If we promise to give him more labour than he has given us, we over-pay him.

In practice, when two men are ready to do the work and only one man wants to have it done, the two men are obliged each other for it, and the one who gets it to do is under-paid. But when two men want the work done and there is only one man ready to do it, the two men who want it come overbid each other, and the workman is over-paid. The central principle of right or just payment lies between the two points of injustice.

Proportion of labour which is directed is fruitful just as good as the fault (or 'injustice' as it is called) of the labourer not given or 'adv. need', ought to be taken into account and not need by an additional quantity of labour in the subsequent repayment. Therefore the typical form of bargain will be: If you give me a pound for a day's work, I will give you an hour and five minutes for a day's work. If you give me a pound of bread for a day's work, I will give you twelve ounces of bread for a day's work and so on.

Now if two men are ready to do the work and if I employ one who offers to work at half price, he will be half-starved while the other man will be left out of employment. Even if I pay due wages to the workman chosen by me, the other man will be unemployed. But then my workman will not have to starve, and I shall have made a just use of my money. If I pay due wages to my man, I shall not be able to amass unnecessary riches, to waste money on luxuries and to add to the mass of poverty in the world. The workman who receives due wages from me will

act justly to his subordinates. Thus the stream of justice will not dry up, but gather strength as it flows onward. And the nation with such a sense of justice will be happy and prosperous.

We thus find that the economists are wrong in thinking that competition is good for a nation. Competition only enables the purchaser to obtain his labour unjustly cheap, with the result that the rich grow richer and the poor poorer. In the long run it can only lead the nation to ruin. A workman should receive a just wage according to his ability. Even then there will be competition of a sort, but the people will be happy and skilful, because they will not have to underbid one another, but to acquire new skills in order to secure employment. This is the secret of the attractiveness of government services in which salaries are fixed according to the gradation of posts. The candidate for it does not offer to work with a lower salary but only claims that he is abler than his competitors. The same is the case in the army and in the navy, where there is little corruption. But in trade and manufacture there is oppressive competition, which results in fraud, chicanery and theft. Rotten goods are manufactured. The manufacturer, the labourer, the consumer,—each is mindful of his own interest. This poisons all human intercourse. Labourers starve and go on strike. Manufacturers become rogues and consumers too neglect the ethical aspect of their own conduct. One injustice leads to many others, and in the end the employer,

the operative and the customer are all unhappy and go to rack and ruin. The very wealth of the people acts among them as a curse.

Nothing in history has been so disgraceful to human intellect as the acceptance among us of the common doctrines of economics as a science. I know no previous instance in history of a nation's establishing a systematic disobedience to the first principles of its professed religion.

The writings which we (verbally) esteem as divine not only denounce the love of money as the source of all evil, and as an idolatry abhorred of the deity, but declare mammon service to be the accurate and irreconcilable opposite of God's service, and whenever they speak of riches absolute and poverty absolute, declare woe to the rich and blessing to the poor.

True economics is the economics of justice. People will be happy in so far as they learn to do justice and be righteous. All else is not only vain but leads straight to destruction. To teach the people to get rich by hook or by crook is to do them an immense disservice.

## AD VALOREM

We have seen how the ideas upon which political economy is based are misleading. Translated into action they can only make the individual and the nation unhappy. They make the poor poorer and the rich richer and none are any the happier for it.

Economics do not take the conduct of men into account but hold that the accumulation of wealth is the sign of prosperity, and that the happiness of nations depends upon their wealth alone. The more factories, the merrier. Thus men leave village farms with their spring winds and coming to cities, live diminished lives in the midst of noise, of darkness, and of deadly exhalation. This leads to deterioration of the national physique, and to increasing avarice and immorality. If some one talks of steps to be taken to eradicate vice, so-called wise men will say that it is of no use at all that the poor should receive education and that it is best to let things alone. They however forget that the rich are responsible for the immorality of the poor, who work like slaves in order to supply them with their luxuries, and have not a moment which they can call their own for self-betterment. Envyng the rich, the poor also try to be rich, and when they fail in this effort, they are angry. They then lose their senses, and try to make money

by force or fraud. Thus both we live and labour are borne of ill-treatment, are utilized for chicanery.

Labour in the real sense of the term is that which produces useful articles. Useful articles are those which support human life, such as food, clothes, or houses, and enable men to perfect the functions of their own lives to the utmost and also to exercise a helpful influence over the lives of others. The establishment of big factories with a view to getting rich is a leading cause of evil. Many people misinterpret big factories as a cause of it. Accumulated wealth which leads to the destruction of a nation is of no earthly use. The problems of modern times are responsible for a deepening and unjust war which originates from the enslavement of mankind.

Some people say that it is impossible to map it knowledge to the people to the condition of the masses, let us therefore live in a community and amass riches, but this is an immoral attitude. For the good man who observes ethical rule and does not give way to greed has a disengaged mind, does not stray from the right path, and influences others by his acts. If the individuals who constitute a nation are immoral, so is the nation too. If we behave as we choose and let the same time let our neighbours to test for their wrongdoing the results can only be disappointing.

We thus see that money is only an instrument which makes for misery as well as happiness. In the hands of a good man it helps in the cultivation of land and the harvesting of crops. Cultivators work in



innocent contentment and the nation is happy. But in the hands of a bad man, money helps to produce say gunpowder which works havoc among its manufacturers as well as among its victims. Therefore THERE IS NO WEALTH BUT LIFE. That country is the richest which nourishes the greatest number of noble and happy human beings; that man is richest who, having perfected the functions of his own life to the utmost, has also the widest helpful influence, both personal and by means of his possessions, over the lives of others.

This is not a time for self-indulgence but for each of us to labour according to our capacity. If one man lives in idleness, another has to put in a double amount of work. This is at the root of the distress of the poor in England. Some so-called work is nugatory as in jewel-cutting and even destructive as in war. It brings about a diminution in the national capital, and is not beneficial to the worker himself. It seems as if men are employed, but really they are idle. The rich oppress the poor by misuse of riches. Employers and employees are at daggers drawn with one another, and men are reduced to the level of beasts.

## CONCLUSION

Ruskin's book thus paraphrased has a lesson for Indians no less than for the Englishmen to whom it was primarily addressed. New ideas are in the air in India. Our young men who have received Western education are full of spirit. This spirit should be directed into the right channels, as otherwise it can only do us harm. 'Let us have Swaraj' is one slogan, 'let us industrialize the country' is another.

But we hardly understand what Swaraj is. Natal for instance enjoys Swaraj but her Swaraj stinks in our nostrils, for she crushes the negroes, and oppresses the Indians. If by some chance the negroes and the Indians left Natal, its white men would fight among themselves and bring about their own destruction.

If not like Natal's will we have Swaraj as in the Transvaal one of whose leaders, General Smuts, breaks his promises, says one thing and does another? He has dispensed with the services of English policemen and employed Afrikaners instead. I do not think that this is going to help any of the two nationalities in the long run. Selfish men will loot their own people, when there are no more 'outsiders' left to be looted.

Thus Swaraj is not enough to make a nation happy. What would be the result of Swaraj being conferred on a band of robbers? They would be

happy only if they were placed under the control of a good man who was not a robber himself. The United States, England and France for instance are powerful States, but there is no reason to think that they are really happy

Swaraj really means self-control. Only he is capable of self-control who observes the rules of morality, does not cheat or give up truth, and does his duty to his parents, wife and children, servants and neighbours. Such a man is in enjoyment of Swaraj, no matter where he lives. A State enjoys Swaraj if it can boast of a large number of such good citizens

It is not right that one people should rule another. British rule in India is an evil, but let us not run away with the idea that all will be well when the British quit India

The existence of British rule in the country is due to our disunity, immorality and ignorance. If these national defects were overcome, not only would the British leave India without a shot being fired but we would be enjoying real Swaraj.

Some foolish Indians rejoice in bomb-throwing, but if all the Britishers in the country were thus killed, the killers would become the rulers of India who would only have a change of masters. The bomb now thrown at Englishmen will be aimed at Indians after the English are there no longer. It was a Frenchman who murdered the President of the French Republic. It was an American who murdered

President Cleveland Let us not blindly imitate Western people

If Swaraj cannot be attained by the sin of killing Englishmen, it cannot be attained either by the erection of huge factories Gold and silver may be accumulated but they will not lead to the establishment of Swaraj Ruskin has proved this to the hilt Western civilization is a mere baby, a hundred or only fifty years old And yet it has reduced Europe to a sorry plight Let us pray that India is saved from the fate that has overtaken Europe, where the nations are poised for an attack on one another, and are silent only because of the stockpiling of armaments Some day there will be an explosion, and then Europe will be a veritable hell on earth Non-white races are looked upon as legitimate prey by every European State What else can we expect where covetousness is the ruling passion in the breasts of men? Europeans pounce upon new territories like crows upon a piece of meat I am inclined to think that this is due to their mass-production factories

India must indeed have Swaraj but she must have it by righteous methods Our Swaraj must be real Swaraj, which cannot be attained by either violence or industrialization India was once a golden land, because Indians then had hearts of gold The land is still the same but it is a desert because we are corrupt It can become a land of gold again only if the base metal of our present national character is transmuted into gold The philosopher's stone which

can effect this <sup>1</sup>transformation is a little word of two syllables—*Satya* (Truth). If every Indian sticks to truth, Swaraj will come to us of its own accord.

<sup>1</sup> 'Institutions,' says Herbert Spencer 'are dependent on character; and however changed in their superficial aspects, cannot be changed in their essential natures faster than character changes'

HIND SWARAJ  
OR  
INDIAN HOME RULE



## PREFACE TO THE NEW EDITION

[ In issuing this new edition of *Hind Swaraj* it may not be inappropriate to publish the following that I wrote in the *Haryan* in connection of the *Hind Swaraj Special Number* of the *Aryan Path* Though Gandhiji's views as expressed in the first edition of *Hind Swaraj* have remained in substance unchanged, they have gone through a necessary evolution My article copied below throws some light on this evolution The proof copy of this edition has been revised by numerous friends to whom I am deeply indebted

Wardha, 11-12-'38

—M D ]

### **An Important Publication**

Unique in its conception and beautifully successful in its execution is the *Special Hind Swaraj Number* of the *Aryan Path* It owes its appearance mainly to the devoted labours of that gifted sister Shrimati Sophia Wadia who sent copies of *Hind Swaraj* (*Indian Home Rule*) to numerous friends abroad and invited the most prominent of them to express their views on the book She had herself devoted special articles to the book and seen in it the hope for future India, but she wanted the European thinkers and writers to say that it had in it the potency to help even Europe out of its chaos, and therefore she thought of this plan The result is remarkable The special number contains articles by Professor Soddy, G D H Cole, C Delisle Burns, John Middleton Murry, J D Beresford, Hugh Fausset, Claude Houghton, Gerald Heard and Irene Rathbone Some of these are of



course well-known pacifists and socialists. One wonders what the number would have been like, if it had included in it articles by non-pacifist and non-socialist writers! The articles are so arranged "that adverse criticisms and objections raised in earlier articles are mostly answered in subsequent ones". But there are one or two criticisms which have been made practically by all the writers, and it would be worth while considering them here. There are certain things which it would be well to recognize at once. Thus Professor Soddy remarks that, having just returned from a visit to India, he saw little outwardly to suggest that the doctrine inculcated in the book had attained any considerable measure of success. That is quite true. Equally true is Mr. G. D. H. Cole's remark that though Gandhiji is "as near as a man can be to Swaraj in a purely personal sense," "he has never solved, to his own satisfaction, the other problem—that of finding terms of collaboration that could span the gulf between man and man, between acting alone and helping others to act in accordance with their lights, which involves acting with them and as one of them—being at once one's self and someone else, someone one's self can and must regard and criticize and attempt to value." Also as John Middleton Murry says, "the efficacy of non-violence is quickly exhausted when used as a mere technique of political pressure",—when the question arises, 'Is non-violence *fante de mieux*, really non-violence at all?'

But the whole process is one of endless evolution.

In working for the end, man also works for perfecting the means. The principle of non-violence and love was enunciated by Buddha and Christ centuries ago. It has been applied through these centuries by individual people with success on small clear-cut issues. As it has been recognized, and as Gerald Heard has pointed out, "the world-wide and age-long interest of Mr. Gandhi's experiment lies in the fact that he has attempted to make the method work in what may be called the wholesale or national scale." The difficulties of that application are obvious, but Gandhi trusts that they are not insurmountable. The experiment seemed impossible in India in 1921 and had to be abandoned, but what was then impossible became possible in 1930. Even now the question often arises "What is a non-violent means?" It will take long practice to standardize the meaning and content of this term. But the means thereof is self-purification and more self-purification. What Western thinkers often lose sight of is that the fundamental condition of non-violence is love, and pure unselfish love is impossible without unsullied purity of mind and body.

### **The Attack on Machinery and Civilization**

What is a common feature of all the other appreciative reviews of the book is in the reviewers' opinion Gandhi's unwarranted condemnation of machinery. "He forgets, in the urgency of his vision," says Middleton Murry, "that the very spinning wheel he loves is also a machine, and also unnatural. On his principles it should be abolished."

"This," says Prof Delisle Burns, "is a fundamental philosophical error. It implies that we are to regard as morally evil any instrument which may be misused. But even the spinning wheel is a machine, and spectacles on the nose are mere mechanisms for 'bodily' eyesight. The plough is a machine, and the very earliest mechanisms for drawing water are themselves only the later survivals of perhaps ten thousand years of human effort to improve the lives of men. Any mechanism may be misused, but if it is, the moral evil is in the man who misuses it, not in the mechanism." I must confess that in "the urgency of his vision" Gandhiji has used rather crude language about machinery, which if he were revising the book he would himself alter. For I am sure Gandhiji would accept all the statements I have quoted here, and he has never attributed to mechanisms moral qualities which belong to the men who use them. Thus in 1924 he used language which is reminiscent of the two writers I have just quoted. I shall reproduce a dialogue that took place in Delhi. Replying to a question whether he was against *all* machinery, Gandhiji said.

"How can I be when I know that even this body is a most delicate piece of machinery? The spinning wheel is a machine; a little toothpick is a machine. What I object to is the craze for machinery, not machinery as such. The craze is for what they call labour-saving machinery. Men go on 'saving labour' till thousands are without work and thrown on the open

streets to die of starvation. I want to save time and labour, not for a fraction of mankind but *for all* I want the concentration of wealth, not in the hands of a few, but in the hands of all. Today machinery merely helps a few to ride on the backs of millions. The impetus behind it all is not the philanthropy to save labour, but greed. It is against this constitution of things that I am fighting with all my might . . . The supreme consideration is man. The machine should not tend to atrophy the limbs of man. For instance, I would make intelligent exceptions. Take the case of the Singer's Sewing Machine. It is one of the few useful things ever invented, and there is a romance about the device itself."

"But," asked the questioner, "there would have to be a factory for making these sewing machines, and it would have to contain power-driven machinery of ordinary type."

"Yes," said Gandhiji, in reply. "But I am socialist enough to say that such factories should be nationalized, State-controlled. The saving of the labour of the individual should be the object, and not human greed the motive. Thus, for instance, I would welcome any day a machine to straighten crooked spindles. Not that blacksmiths will cease to make spindles, they will continue to provide spindles but when the spindle goes wrong every spinner will have a machine to get it straight. Therefore replace greed by love and everything will be all right."

"But," said the questioner, "if you make an

exception of the Singer's Sewing Machine and your spindle, where would these exceptions end?"

"Just where they cease to help the individual and encroach upon his individuality. The machine should not be allowed to cripple the limbs of man."

"But, ideally, would you not rule out *all* machinery? When you except the sewing machine, you will have to make exceptions of the bicycle, the motor car, etc."

"No, I don't," he said, "because they do not satisfy any of the primary wants of man; for it is not the primary need of man to traverse distances with the rapidity of a motor car. The needle on the contrary happens to be an essential thing in life, a primary need."

But he added. "Ideally, I would rule out all machinery, even as I would reject this very body, which is not helpful to salvation, and seek the absolute liberation of the soul. From that point of view I would reject all machinery, but machines will remain because, like the body, they are inevitable. The body itself, as I told you, is the purest piece of mechanism; but if it is a hindrance to the highest flights of the soul, it has to be rejected"

I do not think any of the critics would be in fundamental disagreement with this position. The machine is, like the body, useful if and only to the extent that it subserves the growth of the soul.

Similarly about Western civilization Mr. G D. H. Cole counters the proposition that "Western

civilization is of sharp necessity at enmity with the human soul" "I say that the horrors of Spain and Abyssinia, the perpetual fear that hangs over us, the destitution in the midst of potential plenty, are defects, grave defects, of our Western civilization but are not of its very essence. . . I do not say that we shall mend this civilization of ours, but I do not believe it to be past mending I do not believe that it rests upon a sheer denial of what is necessary to the human soul" Quite so, and the defects Gandhiji pointed out were not inherent defects, but the defects of its tendencies, and Gandhiji's object in the book was to contrast the tendencies of the Indian civilization with those of the Western Gandhiji would wholly agree with G D H Cole that Western civilization is not past mending, also that the West will need a "Home Rule" after the fashion of the West, and also conceived by "leaders who are masters of themselves, as Gandhiji is, but masters after our Western fashion, which is not his, or India's "

### **Limitations of the Doctrine**

G D H Cole has put the following poser "Is it so when German and Italian airmen are massacring the Spanish people, when Japanese airmen are slaughtering thousands upon thousands in Chinese cities, when German armies have marched into Austria and are threatening to march into Czechoslovakia, when Abyssinia has been bloodily bombed into defeat? Until two years or so ago, I believed myself opposed to war and death-dealing violence under all circumstances

But today, hating war, I would risk war to stop these horrors." How acute is the struggle within himself is apparent from the sentences that follow: "I would risk war; and yet, even now, that second self of mine shrinks back appalled at the thought of killing a man. Personally, I would much sooner die than kill. But may it not be my duty to try to kill rather than to die? Gandhi might answer that no such dilemma could confront a man who had achieved his personal Swaraj. I do not claim to have achieved mine, but I am unconvinced that the dilemma would confront me, here and now in Western Europe, less disturbingly if I had."

Occasions like those Mr. Cole has mentioned test one's faith, but the answer has been given by Gandhiji more than once, though he has not completely achieved his Swaraj, for the simple reason that for him Swaraj is incomplete so long as his fellow-beings are bereft of it. But he lives in faith, and the faith in non-violence does not begin to shake at the mention of Italian or Japanese barbarities. For violence breeds the results of violence, and once you start the game there is no limit to be drawn. Philip Mumford in the *War Resister* has replied as follows to a Chinese friend urging action on behalf of China.

"Your enemy is the Japanese Government and not the Japanese peasants and soldiers—unfortunate and uneducated people who do not even know why they are being asked to fight. Yet, if you use ordinary military methods of

defending your country, it is these guiltless people who are not your real enemies whom you must kill. If only China would try and preserve herself by the non-violent tactics used by Gandhiji in India, tactics which are indeed far more in accordance with the teachings of her great religious leaders, she would, I venture to say, be far more successful than she will by copying the militarist methods of Europe. Surely it is a lesson to mankind in general that the Chinese, the most pacific people on earth, have preserved themselves and their civilization for a longer period in history than any of the warlike races. Please do not think we do not honour those gallant Chinese who are fighting in defence of their country. We honour their sacrifice and recognize that they hold different principles from ourselves. None the less, we believe that killing is evil in all circumstances and out of it good cannot come. Pacifism will not spare you from all suffering, but in the long run, it is, I believe, a more effective weapon against the would-be conqueror than all your fighting forces, and what is most important, it will keep alive the ideals of your race."

Miss Irene Rathbone poses a similar question. "What human being on this earth, normal or saint-like, can endure that small boys and girls should perish if, by bowing to the tyrant and denying his own conscience, he can save them? That question



Gandhi does not answer. He does not even pose it. . . . Christ is clearer. . . . Here are his words. 'But whoso shall offend one of these little ones, which believe in me, it were better that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea'. . . . Christ is a greater help to us than Gandhi. . . . " I do not think Christ's words express anything more than his wrath, and the action suggested is not by way of punishment to be imposed by another on the offender, but one to be imposed on himself by himself And is Miss Rathbone sure that she can, by using what she supposes to be Christ's method, save the child? She is wrong in thinking that Gandhi has not posed the question. He has posed it and answered it emphatically, as it was posed and answered in action by those immortal Muslim martyrs 1300 years ago who suffered women and children to die of hunger and thirst rather than bow to the tyrant and deny their own conscience. For, in bowing to the tyrant and denying your own conscience, you encourage the tyrant to perpetrate further horrors.

But even Miss Irene Rathbone calls *Hind Swaraj* "an enormously powerful book", and says that by virtue of it she has found "myself forced by its tremendous honesty to search my own honesty I would implore people to read it."

The Editors of the *Aryan Path* have done a distinct service to the cause of peace and non-violence by issuing their *Hind Swaraj Special Number*.

## PREFACE

When Lord Lothian was at Segaon he asked me if I could give him a copy of *Hind Swaraj*, for, as he said, all that Gandhiji was teaching now lay in the germ in that little book which deserved to be read and re-read in order to understand Gandhiji properly

Curiously enough, about the same time, Shrimati Sophia Wadia was writing an article on the book exhorting all our Ministers and M L A s, all the British and Indian Civil Servants, indeed every one who wanted the present non-violent experiment in democracy to succeed, to read and re-read the book "How can a non-violent man be a dictator in his own home?" she asks "How can he be a wine-bibber? How can a lawyer advise his client to go to court and fight? The answers to all these questions raise highly important practical issues. The people's education in *Hind Swaraj*, in which these problems are dealt with from the point of view of principles, should be extensively carried on "

Her appeal is timely. The book was written in 1908, during Gandhiji's return voyage from London, in answer to the Indian school of violence and published serially in the columns of the *Indian Opinion*, edited by Gandhiji. Then it was published in book form, to be proscribed by the Bombay Government. Gandhiji had translated the book for Mr Kallenbach. In answer to the Bombay Government's action, he

published the English translation. When Gokhale saw the translation, on his visit to South Africa in 1912, he thought it so crude and hastily conceived that he prophesied that Gandhiji himself would destroy the book after spending a year in India. With deference to the memory of the great teacher, I may say that his prediction has failed to come true. In 1921, Gandhiji, writing about it, said "It teaches the gospel of love in place of that of hate. It replaces violence with self-sacrifice. It pits soul force against brute force. I withdraw nothing except one word of it, and that in deference to a lady friend. The booklet is a severe condemnation of 'modern civilization'. It was written in 1908. My conviction is deeper today than ever. . . But I would warn the reader against thinking that I am today aiming at the Swaraj described therein. I know that India is not ripe for it. It may seem an impertinence to say so. But such is my conviction. I am individually working for the self-rule pictured therein. But today my corporate activity is undoubtedly devoted to the attainment of Parliamentary Swaraj, in accordance with the wishes of the people of India." Even in 1938 he would alter nothing in the book, except perhaps the language in some parts. It is being presented to the reader unabridged.

But whether India may be ripe for it or not, it is best for Indians to study the seminal book which contains the ultimate logical conclusion of the acceptance of the twin principles of Truth and

Non-violence, and then decide whether these principles should be accepted or rejected. On being told that the book had been out of print for some time and that a few copies of its Madras edition were available at eight annas a copy, Gandhiji said that it should be published immediately at a nominal price, so that it may be within easy reach of those who may wish to read it. The Navajivan Publishing House is therefore publishing it at practically the cost price.

Wardha, 2-2-'38

MAHATMA DESAI

## A WORD OF EXPLANATION

It is certainly my good fortune that this booklet of mine is receiving wide attention. The original is in Gujarati. It has a chequered career. It was first published in the columns of the *Indian Opinion* of South Africa. It was written in 1908 during my return voyage from London to South Africa in answer to the Indian school of violence and its prototype in South Africa. I came in contact with every known Indian anarchist in London. Their bravery impressed me, but I felt that their zeal was misguided. I felt that violence was no remedy for India's ills and that her civilization required the use of a different and higher weapon for self-protection. The State of South Africa was still an infant hardly two years old. But it had developed sufficiently to permit me to write of it with some degree of confidence. What I wrote was so much appreciated that it was

published as a booklet. It attracted some attention in India. The Bombay Government prohibited its circulation. I replied by publishing its translation. I thought it was due to my English friends that they should know its contents.

In my opinion it is a book which can be put into the hands of a child. It teaches the gospel of love in place of that of hate. It replaces violence with self-sacrifice. It pits soul force against brute force. It has gone through several editions and I commend it to those who would care to read it. I withdraw nothing except one word of it, and that in deference to a lady friend.

The booklet is a severe condemnation of 'modern civilization'. It was written in 1908. My conviction is deeper today than ever. I feel that if India will discard 'modern civilization', she can only gain by doing so.

But I would warn the reader against thinking that I am today aiming at the Swaraj described therein. I know that India is not ripe for it. It may seem an impertinence to say so. But such is my conviction. I am individually working for the self-rule pictured therein. But today my corporate activity is undoubtedly devoted to the attainment of Parliamentary Swaraj in accordance with the wishes of the people of India. I am not aiming at destroying railways or hospitals, though I would certainly welcome their natural destruction. Neither railways nor hospitals are a test of a high and pure

civilization At best they are a necessary evil. Neither adds one inch to the moral stature of a nation Nor am I aiming at a permanent destruction of law courts, much as I regard it as a 'consummation devoutly to be wished' Still less am I trying to destroy all machinery and mills It requires a higher simplicity and renunciation than the people are today prepared for

The only part of the programme which is now being carried out is that of non-violence But I regret to have to confess that even that is not being carried out in the spirit of the book If it were, India would establish Swaraj in a day If India adopted the doctrine of love as an active part of her religion and introduced it in her politics, Swaraj would descend upon India from heaven But I am painfully aware that that event is far off as yet

I offer these comments because I observe that much is being quoted from the booklet to discredit the present movement I have even seen writings suggesting that I am playing a deep game, that I am using the present turmoil to foist my fads on India, and am making religious experiments at India's expense I can only answer that Satyagraha is made of sterner stuff There is nothing reserved and nothing secret in it A portion of the whole theory of life described in *Hind Swaraj* is undoubtedly being carried into practice There is no danger attendant upon the whole of it being practised. But it is not right to scare away people by reproducing from my writings

passages that are irrelevant to the issue before the country.

*Young India*, January, 1921

M. K. GANDHI

## A MESSAGE

I welcome your advertising the principles in defence of which *Hind Swaraj* was written. The English edition is a translation of the original which was in Gujarati. I might change the language here and there, if I had to rewrite the booklet. But after the stormy thirty years through which I have since passed, I have seen nothing to make me alter the views expounded in it. Let the reader bear in mind that it is a faithful record of conversations I had with workers, one of whom was an avowed anarchist. He should also know that it stopped the rot that was about to set in among some Indians in South Africa. The reader may balance against this the opinion of a dear friend, who alas<sup>1</sup> is no more, that it was the production of a fool.<sup>1</sup>

Segaon, July 14th, 1938

M. K. GANDHI

<sup>1</sup> Reproduced from the *Aryan Path-Special Hind Swaraj Number*, published in September, 1938.

## CHAPTER I

### THE CONGRESS AND ITS OFFICIALS

READER Just at present there is a Home Rule wave passing over India. All our countrymen appear to be pining for National Independence. A similar spirit pervades them even in South Africa. Indians seem to be eager to acquire rights. Will you explain your views in this matter?

EDITOR. You have put the question well, but the answer is not easy. One of the objects of a newspaper is to understand popular feeling and to give expression to it, another is to arouse among the people certain desirable sentiments, and the third is fearlessly to expose popular defects. The exercise of all these three functions is involved in answering your question. To a certain extent the people's will has to be expressed, certain sentiments will need to be fostered, and defects will have to be brought to light. But, as you have asked the question, it is my duty to answer it.

READER Do you then consider that a desire for Home Rule has been created among us?

EDITOR That desire gave rise to the National Congress. The choice of the word "National" implies it.

READER That surely, is not the case. Young India seems to ignore the Congress. It is considered to be an instrument for perpetuating British Rule.



EDITOR: That opinion is not justified. Had not the Grand Old Man of India prepared the soil, our young men could not have even spoken about Home Rule. How can we forget what Mr. Hume has written, how he has lashed us into action, and with what effort he has awakened us, in order to achieve the objects of the Congress? Sir William Wedderburn has given his body, mind and money to the same cause. His writings are worthy of perusal to this day. Professor Gokhale in order to prepare the nation, embraced poverty and gave twenty years of his life. Even now, he is living in poverty. The late Justice Budruddin Tyebji was also one of those who, through the Congress, sowed the seed of Home Rule. Similarly, in Bengal, Madras, the Punjab and other places, there have been lovers of India and members of the Congress, both Indian and English.

READER: Stay, stay, you are going too far, you are straying away from my question. I have asked you about Home-or Self-Rule, you are discussing foreign rule. I do not desire to hear English names, and you are giving me such names. In these circumstances, I do not think we can ever meet. I shall be pleased if you will confine yourself to Home Rule. All other talk will not satisfy me.

EDITOR: You are impatient. I cannot afford to be likewise. If you will bear with me for a while, I think you will find that you will obtain what you want. Remember the old proverb that the tree does not grow in one day. The fact that you have checked

me and that you do not want to hear about the well-wishers of India shows that, for you at any rate, Home Rule is yet far away. If we had many like you, we would never make any advance. This thought is worthy of your attention.

READER It seems to me that you simply want to put me off by talking round and round. Those whom you consider to be well-wishers of India are not such in my estimation. Why, then, should I listen to your discourse on such people? What has he whom you consider to be the Father of the Nation done for it? He says that the English Governors will do justice and that we should co-operate with them.

EDITOR I must tell you, with all gentleness, that it must be a matter of shame for us that you should speak about that great man in terms of disrespect. Just look at his work. He has dedicated his life to the service of India. We have learned what we know from him. It was the respected Dadabhai who taught us that the English had sucked our life-blood. What does it matter that, today, his trust is still in the English nation? Is Dadabhai less to be honoured because, in the exuberance of youth, we are prepared to go a step further? Are we, on that account, wiser than he? It is a mark of wisdom not to kick away the very step from which we have risen higher. The removal of a step from a staircase brings down the whole of it. When, out of infancy, we grow into youth, we do not depise infancy, but, on the

contrary, we recall with affection the days of our childhood. If, after many years of study, a teacher were to teach me something, and if I were to build a little more on the foundation laid by that teacher, I would not, on that account, be considered wiser than the teacher. He would always command my respect. Such is the case with the Grand Old Man of India. We must admit that he is the author of nationalism.

READER You have spoken well. I can now understand that we must look upon Mr. Dadabhai with respect. Without him and men like him, we should probably not have the spirit that fires us. How can the same be said of Professor Gokhale? He has constituted himself a great friend of the English, he says that we have to learn a great deal from them, that we have to learn their political wisdom, before we can talk of Home Rule. I am tired of reading his speeches.

EDITOR: If you are tired, it only betrays your impatience. We believe that those, who are discontented with the slowness of their parents and are angry because the parents would not run with their children, are considered disrespectful to their parents. Professor Gokhale occupies the place of a parent. What does it matter if he cannot run with us? A nation that is desirous of securing Home Rule cannot afford to despise its ancestors. We shall become useless, if we lack respect for our elders. Only men with mature thoughts are capable of ruling themselves and not the hasty-tempered. Moreover,

how many Indians were there like Professor Gokhale, when he gave himself to Indian education? I verily believe that whatever Professor Gokhale does, he does with pure motives and with a view to serving India. His devotion to the Motherland is so great that he would give his life for it, if necessary. Whatever he says is said not to flatter anyone but because he believes it to be true. We are bound, therefore, to entertain the highest regard for him.

READER Are we, then, to follow him in every respect?

EDITOR I never said any such thing. If we conscientiously differed from him, the learned Professor himself would advise us to follow the dictates of our conscience rather than him. Our chief purpose is not to decry his work, but to believe that he is infinitely greater than we are, and to feel assured that compared with his work for India, ours is infinitesimal. Several newspapers write disrespectfully of him. It is our duty to protest against such writings. We should consider men like Professor Gokhale to be the pillars of Home Rule. It is bad habit to say that another man's thoughts are bad and ours only are good and that those holding different views from ours are the enemies of the country.

READER I now begin to understand somewhat your meaning. I shall have to think the matter over. But what you say about Mr. Hume and Sir William Wedderburn is beyond my comprehension.

EDITOR The same rule holds good for the English

as for the Indians. I can never subscribe to the statement that all Englishmen are bad. Many Englishmen desire Home Rule for India. That the English people are somewhat more selfish than others is true, but that does not prove that every Englishman is bad. We who seek justice will have to do justice to others. Sir William does not wish ill to India,—that should be enough for us. As we proceed, you will see that, if we act justly, India will be sooner free. You will see, too, that if we shun every Englishman as an enemy, Home Rule will be delayed. But if we are just to them, we shall receive their support in our progress towards the goal.

READER All this seems to me at present to be simply nonsensical. English support and the obtaining of Home Rule are two contradictory things. How can the English people tolerate Home Rule for us? But I do not want you to decide this question for me just yet. To spend time over it is useless. When you have shown how we can have Home Rule, perhaps I shall understand your views. You have prejudiced me against you by discoursing on English help. I would, therefore, beseech you not to continue this subject.

EDITOR I have no desire to do so. That you are prejudiced against me is not a matter for much anxiety. It is well that I should say unpleasant things at the commencement. It is my duty patiently to try to remove your prejudice.

READER. I like that last statement. It emboldens

me to say what I like One thing still puzzles me I do not understand how the Congress laid the foundation of Home Rule

EDITOR Let us see The Congress brought together Indians from different parts of India, and enthused us with the idea of nationality The Government used to look upon it with disfavour The Congress has always insisted that the Nation should control revenue and expenditure It has always desired self-government after the Canadian model Whether we can get it or not, whether we desire it or not, and whether there is not something more desirable, are different questions All I have to show is that the Congress gave us a foretaste of Home Rule To deprive it of the honour is not proper, and for us to do so would not only be ungrateful, but retard the fulfilment of our object To treat the Congress as an institution inimical to our growth as a nation would disable us from using that body

## THE PARTITION OF BENGAL

READER. Considering the matter as you put it, it seems proper to say that the foundation of Home Rule was laid by the Congress. But you will admit that this cannot be considered a real awakening. When and how did the real awakening take place?

EDITOR: The seed is never seen. It works underneath the ground, is itself destroyed, and the tree which rises above the ground is alone seen. Such is the case with the Congress. Yet, what you call the real awakening took place after the Partition of Bengal. For this we have to be thankful to Lord Curzon. At the time of the Partition, the people of Bengal reasoned with Lord Curzon, but in the pride of power he disregarded all their prayers. He took it for granted that Indians could only prattle, that they could never take any effective steps. He used insulting language, and in the teeth of all opposition partitioned Bengal. That day may be considered to be the day of the partition of the British Empire. The shock the British power received through the Partition has never been equalled by any other act. This does not mean that the other injustices done to India are less glaring than that done by the Partition. The salt-tax is not a small injustice. We shall see many such things later on. But the people were ready to resist the Partition. At that time feeling ran

high Many leading Bengalis were ready to lose their all They knew their power, hence the conflagration It is now well-nigh unquenchable, it is not necessary to quench it either The Partition will go, Bengal will be reunited, but the rift in the English barque will remain, it must daily widen India awakened is not likely to fall asleep The demand for the abrogation of the Partition is tantamount to a demand for Home Rule Leaders in Bengal know this British officials realize it That is why the Partition still remains As time passes, the Nation is being forged Nations are not formed in a day, the formation requires years.

READER What, in your opinion, are the results of the Partition?

EDITOR. Hitherto we have considered that for redress of grievances we must approach the throne, and if we get no redress we must sit still, except that we may still petition After the Partition, people saw that petitions must be backed up by force, and that they must be capable of suffering This new spirit must be considered to be the chief result of the Partition That spirit was seen in the outspoken writings in the Press That which the people said tremblingly and in secret began to be said and to be written publicly The Swadeshi movement was inaugurated People, young and old, used to run away at the sight of an English face, it now no longer awes them They do not fear even a row, or being imprisoned Some of the best sons of India are at



present in banishment This is something different from mere petitioning Thus are the people moved. The spirit generated in Bengal has spread in the north to the Punjab, and in the south to Cape Comorin.

READER Do you suggest any other striking result?

EDITOR. The Partition has not only made a rift in the English ship but has made it in ours also Great events always produce great results Our leaders are divided into two parties. the Moderates and the Extremists. These may be considered as the slow party and the impatient party Some call the Moderates the timid party, and the Extremists the bold party. All interpret the two words according to their preconceptions. This much is certain—that there has arisen an enmity between the two The one distrusts the other and imputes motives At the time of the Surat Congress there was almost a fight. I think that this division is not a good thing for the country, but I think also that such divisions will not last long. It all depends upon the leaders how long they will last.

### CHAPTER III

## DISCONTENT AND UNREST

READER Then you consider the Partition to be a cause of the awakening? Do you welcome the unrest which has resulted from it?

EDITOR When a man rises from sleep, he twists his limbs and is restless. It takes some time before he is entirely awakened. Similarly, although the Partition has caused an awakening, the comatose condition has not yet disappeared. We are still twisting our limbs and are still restless, and just as the state between sleep and awakening must be considered to be necessary, so may the present unrest in India be considered a necessary and therefore, a proper state. The knowledge that there is unrest will, it is highly probable, enable us to outgrow it. Rising from sleep, we do not continue in a comatose state, but according to our ability, sooner or later, we are completely restored to our senses. So shall we be free from the present unrest which no one likes.

READER What is the other form of unrest?

EDITOR Unrest is, in reality, discontent. The latter is only now described as unrest. During the Congress-period it was labelled discontent. Mr Hume always said that the spread of discontent in India was necessary. This discontent is a very useful thing. As long as a man is contented with his present lot, so long is it difficult to persuade him to come out of it.

Therefore it is that every reform must be preceded by discontent. We throw away things we have, only when we cease to like them. Such discontent has been produced among us after reading the great works of Indians and Englishmen. Discontent has led to unrest, and the latter has brought about many deaths, many imprisonments, many banishments. Such a state of things will still continue. It must be so. All these may be considered good signs but they may also lead to bad results.

#### CHAPTER IV

### WHAT IS SWARAJ?

READER. I have now learnt what the Congress has done to make India one nation, how the Partition has caused an awakening, and how discontent and unrest have spread through the land. I would now like to know your views on Swaraj. I fear that our interpretation is not the same as yours.

EDITOR. It is quite possible that we do not attach the same meaning to the term. You and I and all Indians are impatient to obtain Swaraj, but we are certainly not decided as to what it is. To drive the English out of India is a thought heard from many mouths, but it does not seem that many have properly considered why it should be so. I must ask you a question. Do not think that it is necessary to drive away the English, if we get all we want?

READER. I should ask of them only one thing,

that is "Please leave our country" If, after they have complied with this request, their withdrawal from India means that they are still in India I should have no objection Then we would understand that, in their language, the word "gone" is equivalent to "remained"

EDITOR Well then, let us suppose that the English have retired What will you do then?

READER That question cannot be answered at this stage The state after withdrawal will depend largely upon the manner of it If, as you assume, they retire, it seems to me we shall still keep their constitution and shall carry on the Government If they simply retire for the asking we should have an army, etc, ready at hand We should, therefore, have no difficulty in carrying on the Government

EDITOR You may think so, I do not. But I will not discuss the matter just now I have to answer your question, and that I can do well by asking you several questions Why do you want to drive away the English?

READER Because India has become impoverished by their Government They take away our money from year to year The most important posts are reserved for themselves We are kept in a state of slavery They behave insolently towards us and disregard our feelings

EDITOR If they do not take our money away, become gentle, and give us responsible posts, would you still consider their presence to be harmful?

READER. That question is useless. It is similar to the question whether there is any harm in associating with a tiger if he changes his nature. Such a question is sheer waste of time. When a tiger changes his nature, Englishmen will change theirs. This is not possible, and to believe it to be possible is contrary to human experience

EDITOR. Supposing we get Self-Government similar to what the Canadians and the South Africans have, will it be good enough?

READER. That question also is useless. We may get it when we have the same powers, we shall then hoist our own flag. As is Japan, so must India be. We must own our navy, our army, and we must have our own splendour, and then will India's voice ring through the world.

EDITOR. You have drawn the picture well. In effect it means this that we want English rule without the Englishman. You want the tiger's nature, but not the tiger, that is to say, you would make India English. And when it becomes English, it will be called not Hindustan but *Englistan*. This is not the Swaraj that I want

READER. I have placed before you my idea of Swaraj as I think it should be. If the education we have received be of any use, if the works of Spencer, Mill and others be of any importance, and if the English Parliament be the Mother of Parliaments, I certainly think that we should copy the English people, and this to such an extent that, just as they

do not allow others to obtain a footing in their country, so we should not allow them or others to obtain it in ours. What they have done in their own country has not been done in any other country. It is, therefore, proper for us to import their institutions. But now I want to know your views.

EDITOR. There is need for patience. My views will develop of themselves in the course of this discourse. It is as difficult for me to understand the true nature of Swaraj as it seems to you to be easy. I shall therefore, for the time being, content myself with endeavouring to show that what you call Swaraj is not truly Swaraj.

## CHAPTER V

### THE CONDITION OF ENGLAND

READER. Then from your statement I deduce that the Government of England is not desirable and not worth copying by us.

EDITOR. Your deduction is justified. The condition of England at present is pitiable. I pray to God that India may never be in that plight. That which you consider to be the Mother of Parliaments is like a sterile woman and a prostitute. Both these are harsh terms, but exactly fit the case. That Parliament has not yet, of its own accord, done a single good thing. Hence I have compared it to a sterile woman. The natural condition of that Parliament is such that, without outside pressure, it can

do nothing. It is like a prostitute because it is under the control of ministers who change from time to time. Today it is under Mr. Asquith, tomorrow it may be under Mr. Balfour.

READER. You have said this sarcastically. The term "sterile woman" is not applicable. The Parliament, being elected by the people, must work under public pressure. This is its quality.

EDITOR. You are mistaken. Let us examine it a little more closely. The best men are supposed to be elected by the people. The members serve without pay and therefore, it must be assumed, only for the public weal. The electors are considered to be educated and therefore we should assume that they would not generally make mistakes in their choice. Such a Parliament should not need the spur of petitions or any other pressure. Its work should be so smooth that its effects would be more apparent day by day. But, as a matter of fact, it is generally acknowledged that the members are hypocritical and selfish. Each thinks of his own little interest. It is fear that is the guiding motive. What is done today may be undone tomorrow. It is not possible to recall a single instance in which finality can be predicted for its work. When the greatest questions are debated, its members have been seen to stretch themselves and to doze. Sometimes the members talk away until the listeners are disgusted. Carlyle has called it the "talking shop of the world." Members vote for their party without a thought. Their so-called discipline binds them to

it If any member, by way of exception, gives an independent vote, he is considered a renegade If the money and the time wasted by Parliament were entrusted to a few good men, the English nation would be occupying today a much higher platform. Parliament is simply a costly toy of the nation. These views are by no means peculiar to me Some great English thinkers have expressed them One of the members of that Parliament recently said that a true Christian could not become a member of it Another said that it was a baby. And if it has remained a baby after an existence of seven hundred years, when will it outgrow its babyhood?

READER You have set me thinking, you do not expect me to accept at once all you say You give me entirely novel views I shall have to digest them Will you now explain the epithet "prostitute"?

EDITOR That you cannot accept my views at once is only right If you will read the literature on this subject, you will have some idea of it Parliament is without a real master Under the Prime Minister, its movement is not steady but it is buffeted about like a prostitute The Prime Minister is more concerned about his power than about the welfare of Parliament His energy is concentrated upon securing the success of his party His care is not always that Parliament shall do right Prime Ministers are known to have made Parliament do things merely for party advantage All this is worth thinking over.

READER Then you are really attacking the very



men whom we have hitherto considered to be patriotic and honest?

EDITOR: Yes, that is true; I can have nothing against Prime Ministers, but what I have seen leads me to think that they cannot be considered really patriotic. If they are to be considered honest because they do not take what are generally known as bribes, let them be so considered, but they are open to subtler influences. In order to gain their ends, they certainly bribe people with honours. I do not hesitate to say that they have neither real honesty nor a living conscience.

READER: As you express these views about Parliament, I would like to hear you on the English people, so that I may have your view of their Government.

EDITOR: To the English voters their newspaper is their Bible. They take their cue from their newspapers which are often dishonest. The same fact is differently interpreted by different newspapers, according to the party in whose interests they are edited. One newspaper would consider a great Englishman to be a paragon of honesty, another would consider him dishonest. What must be the condition of the people whose newspapers are of this type?

READER: You shall describe it.

EDITOR: These people change their views frequently. It is said that they change them every seven years. These views swing like the pendulum of a clock and are never steadfast. The people would

follow a powerful orator or a man who gives them parties, receptions, etc. As are the people, so is their Parliament. They have certainly one quality very strongly developed. They will never allow their country to be lost. If any person were to cast an evil eye on it, they would pluck out his eyes. But that does not mean that the nation possesses every other virtue or that it should be imitated. If India copies England, it is my firm conviction that she will be ruined.

READER. To what do you ascribe this state of England?

EDITOR. It is not due to any peculiar fault of the English people, but the condition is due to modern civilization. It is a civilization only in name. Under it the nations of Europe are becoming degraded and ruined day by day.

## CHAPTER VI

### CIVILIZATION

READER: Now you will have to explain what you mean by civilization.

EDITOR: It is not a question of what I mean. Several English writers refuse to call that civilization which passes under that name. Many books have been written upon that subject. Societies have been formed to cure the nation of the evils of civilization. A great English writer has written a work called *Civilization: Its Cause and Cure*. Therein he has called it a disease.

READER: Why do we not know this generally?

EDITOR: The answer is very simple. We rarely find people arguing against themselves. Those who are intoxicated by modern civilization are not likely to write against it. Their care will be to find out facts and arguments in support of it, and this they do unconsciously, believing it to be true. A man whilst he is dreaming, believes in his dream, he is undeceived only when he is awakened from his sleep. A man labouring under the bane of civilization is like a dreaming man. What we usually read are the works of defenders of modern civilization, which undoubtedly claims among its votaries very brilliant and even some very good men. Their writings hypnotize us. And so, one by one, we are drawn into the vortex.

READER This seems to be very plausible Now will you tell me something of what you have read and thought of this civilization?

EDITOR Let us first consider what state of things is described by the word "civilization" Its true test lies in the fact that people living in it make bodily welfare the object of life We will take some examples The people of Europe today live in better-built houses than they did a hundred years ago This is considered an emblem of civilization, and this is also a matter to promote bodily happiness Formerly, they wore skins, and used spears as their weapons Now, they wear long trousers, and, for embellishing their bodies, they wear a variety of clothing, and, instead of spears, they carry with them revolvers containing five or more chambers If people of a certain country, who have hitherto not been in the habit of wearing much clothing, boots, etc., adopt European clothing, they are supposed to have become civilized out of savagery Formerly, in Europe, people ploughed their lands mainly by manual labour Now, one man can plough a vast tract by means of steam engines and can thus amass great wealth This is called a sign of civilization Formerly, only a few men wrote valuable books Now, anybody writes and prints anything he likes and poisons people's minds Formerly, men travelled in waggons Now, they fly through the air in trains at the rate of four hundred and more miles per day This is considered the height of civilization It has been stated that, as

men progress, they shall be able to travel in airship and reach any part of the world in a few hours. Men will not need the use of their hands and feet. They will press a button, and they will have their clothing by their side. They will press another button, and they will have their newspaper. A third, and a motor-car will be in waiting for them. They will have a variety of delicately dished up food. Everything will be done by machinery. Formerly, when people wanted to fight with one another, they measured between them their bodily strength; now it is possible to take away thousands of lives by one man working behind a gun from a hill. This is civilization. Formerly, men worked in the open air only as much as they liked. Now thousands of workmen meet together and for the sake of maintenance work in factories or mines. Their condition is worse than that of beasts. They are obliged to work, at the risk of their lives, at most dangerous occupations, for the sake of millionaires. Formerly, men were made slaves under physical compulsion. Now they are enslaved by temptation of money and of the luxuries that money can buy. There are now diseases of which people never dreamt before, and an army of doctors is engaged in finding out their cures, and so hospitals have increased. This is a test of civilization. Formerly, special messengers were required and much expense was incurred in order to send letters; today, anyone can abuse his fellow by means of a letter for one penny. True, at the same cost, one can send one's

thanks also Formerly, people had two or three meals consisting of home-made bread and vegetables, now, they require something to eat every two hours so that they have hardly leisure for anything else What more need I say? All this you can ascertain from several authoritative books These are all true tests of civilization And if anyone speaks to the contrary, know that he is ignorant This civilization takes note neither of morality nor of religion Its votaries calmly state that their business is not to teach religion Some even consider it to be a superstitious growth. Others put on the cloak of religion, and prate about morality But, after twenty years' experience, I have come to the conclusion that immorality is often taught in the name of morality. Even a child can understand that in all I have described above there can be no inducement to morality Civilization seeks to increase bodily comforts, and it fails miserably even in doing so

This civilization is irreligion, and it has taken such a hold on the people in Europe that those who are in it appear to be half mad They lack real physical strength or courage They keep up their energy by intoxication They can hardly be happy in solitude Women, who should be the queens of households, wander in the streets or they slave away in factories For the sake of a pittance, half a million women in England alone are labouring under trying circumstances in factories or similar institutions This awful fact is one of the

causes of the daily growing suffragette movement.

This civilization is such that one has only to be patient and it will be self-destroyed. According to the teaching of Mahomed this would be considered a Satanic Civilization. Hinduism calls it the Black Age. I cannot give you an adequate conception of it. It is eating into the vitals of the English nation. It must be shunned. Parliaments are really emblems of slavery. If you will sufficiently think over this, you will entertain the same opinion and cease to blame the English. They rather deserve our sympathy. They are a shrewd nation and I therefore believe that they will cast off the evil. They are enterprising and industrious, and their mode of thought is not inherently immoral. Neither are they bad at heart. I therefore respect them. Civilization is not an incurable disease, but it should never be forgotten that the English people are at present afflicted by it.

## CHAPTER VII

### WHY WAS INDIA LOST?

READER You have said much about civilization—enough to make me ponder over it I do not now know what I should adopt and what I should avoid from the nations of Europe, but one question comes to my lips immediately If civilization is a disease and if it has attacked England, why has she been able to take India, and why is she able to retain it?

EDITOR Your question is not very difficult to answer, and we shall presently be able to examine the true nature of Swaraj, for I am aware that I have still to answer that question I will, however, take up your previous question The English have not taken India, we have given it to them They are not in India because of their strength, but because we keep them Let us now see whether these propositions can be sustained They came to our country originally for purposes of trade. Recall the Company Bahadur Who made it Bahadur? They had not the slightest intention at the time of establishing a kingdom Who assisted the Company's officers? Who was tempted at the sight of their silver? Who bought their goods? History testifies that we did all this In order to become rich all at once we welcomed the Company's officers with open arms We assisted them If I am in the habit



of drinking *bhang* and a seller thereof sells it to me, am I to blame him or myself? By blaming the seller shall I be able to avoid the habit? And, if a particular retailer is driven away will not another take his place? A true servant of India will have to go to the root of the matter. If an excess of food has caused me indigestion, I shall certainly not avoid it by blaming water. He is a true physician who probes the cause of disease, and if you pose as a physician for the disease of India, you will have to find out its true cause.

READER: You are right. Now I think you will not have to argue much with me to drive your conclusions home. I am impatient to know your further views. We are now on a most interesting topic. I shall therefore, endeavour to follow your thought, and stop you when I am in doubt.

EDITOR: I am afraid that, in spite of your enthusiasm, as we proceed further, we shall have differences of opinion. Nevertheless, I shall argue only when you stop me. We have already seen that the English merchants were able to get a footing in India because we encouraged them. When our Princes fought among themselves, they sought the assistance of Company Bahadur. That corporation was versed alike in commerce and war. It was unhampered by questions of morality. Its object was to increase its commerce and to make money. It accepted our assistance, and increased the number of its warehouses. To protect the latter it employed an army which was

utilized by us also Is it not then useless to blame the English for what we did at that time? The Hindus and the Mahomedans were at daggers drawn This, too, gave the Company its opportunity and thus we created the circumstances that gave the Company its control over India. Hence it is truer to say that we gave India to the English than that India was lost

READER Will you now tell me how they are able to retain India?

EDITOR The causes that gave them India enable them to retain it Some Englishmen state that they took and they hold India by the sword Both these statements are wrong The sword is entirely useless for holding India We alone keep them Napoleon is said to have described the English as a nation of shopkeepers It is a fitting description They hold whatever dominions they have for the sake of their commerce. Their army and their navy are intended to protect it When the Transvaal offered no such attractions, the late Mr Gladstone discovered that it was not right for the English to hold it When it became a paying proposition, resistance led to war Mr Chamberlain soon discovered that England enjoyed a suzerainty over the Transvaal It is related that someone asked the late President Kruger whether there was gold in the moon He replied that it was highly unlikely because, if there were, the English would have annexed it Many problems can be solved by remembering that money is their God

Then it follows that we keep the English in India for our base self-interest. We like their commerce, they please us by their subtle methods and get what they want from us. To blame them for this is to perpetuate their power. We further strengthen their hold by quarrelling amongst ourselves. If you accept the above statements, it is proved that the English entered India for the purposes of trade. They remain in it for the same purpose and we help them to do so. Their arms and ammunition are perfectly useless. In this connection I remind you that it is the British flag which is waving in Japan and not the Japanese. The English have a treaty with Japan for the sake of their commerce, and you will see that if they can manage it their commerce will greatly expand in that country. They wish to convert the whole world into a vast market for their goods. That they cannot do so is true, but the blame will not be theirs. They will leave no stone unturned to reach the goal.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE CONDITION OF INDIA

READER I now understand why the English hold India I should like to know your views about the condition of our country

EDITOR It is a sad condition In thinking of it my eyes water and my throat gets parched I have grave doubts whether I shall be able sufficiently to explain what is in my heart It is my deliberate opinion that India is being ground down, not under the English heel, but under that of modern civilization It is groaning under the monster's terrible weight There is yet time to escape it, but every day makes it more and more difficult Religion is dear to me and my first complaint is that India is becoming irreligious Here I am not thinking of the Hindu or the Mahomedan or the Zoroastrian religion but of that religion which underlies all religions We are turning away from God

READER How so?

EDITOR There is a charge laid against us that we are a lazy people and that Europeans are industrious and enterprising We have accepted the charge and we therefore wish to change our condition Hinduism, Islam, Zoroastrianism, Christianity and all other religions teach that we should remain passive about worldly pursuits and active about godly pursuits, that we should set a limit to our worldly ambition and

that our religious ambition should be illimitable Our activity should be directed into the latter channel

READER You seem to be encouraging religious charlatanism. Many a cheat has, by talking in a similar strain, led the people astray

EDITOR You are bringing an unlawful charge against religion Humbug there undoubtedly is about all religions. Where there is light, there is also shadow. I am prepared to maintain that humbugs in worldly matters are far worse than the humbugs in religion. The humbug of civilization that I am endeavouring to show to you is not to be found in religion.

READER How can you say that? In the name of religion Hindus and Mahomedans fought against one another. For the same cause Christians fought Christians Thousands of innocent men have been murdered, thousands have been burned and tortured in its name. Surely, this is much worse than any civilization.

EDITOR: I certainly submit that the above hardships are far more bearable than those of civilization. Everybody understands that the cruelties you have named are not part of religion although they have been practised in its name, therefore there is no aftermath to these cruelties They will always happen so long as there are to be found ignorant and credulous people. But there is no end to the victims destroyed in the fire of civilization Its deadly effect is that people come under its scorching flames believing

it to be all good. They become utterly irreligious and, in reality, derive little advantage from the world. Civilization is like a mouse gnawing while it is soothing us. When its full effect is realized, we shall see that religious superstition is harmless compared to that of modern civilization. I am not pleading for a continuance of religious superstitions. We shall certainly fight them tooth and nail, but we can never do so by disregarding religion. We can only do so by appreciating and conserving the latter.

READER. Then you will contend that the Pax Britannica is a useless encumbrance?

EDITOR. You may see peace if you like, I see none.

READER. You make light of the terror that the Thugs, the Pindaris and the Bhils were to the country.

EDITOR. If you give the matter some thought, you will see that the terror was by no means such a mighty thing. If it had been a very substantial thing, the other people would have died away before the English advent. Moreover, the present peace is only nominal, for by it we have become emasculated and cowardly. We are not to assume that the English have changed the nature of the Pindaris and the Bhils. It is, therefore, better to suffer the Pindari peril than that someone else should protect us from it and thus render us effeminate. I should prefer to be killed by the arrow of a Bhil than to seek unmanly protection. India without such protection was an India full of valour. Macaulay betrayed gross ignorance when he libelled

Indians as being practically cowards. They never merited the charge Cowards living in a country inhabited by hardy mountaineers and infested by wolves and tigers must surely find an early grave. Have you ever visited our fields? I assure you that our agriculturists sleep fearlessly on their farms even today, but the English and you and I would hesitate to sleep where they sleep. Strength lies in absence of fear, not in the quantity of flesh and muscle we may have on our bodies. Moreover, I must remind you who desire Home Rule that, after all, the Bhils, the Pindaris, and the Thugs are our own countrymen. To conquer them is your and my work. So long as we fear our own brethren, we are unfit to reach the goal.

#### CHAPTER IX

### THE CONDITION OF INDIA (CONTINUED). RAILWAYS

READER. You have deprived me of the consolation I used to have regarding peace in India.

EDITOR. I have merely given you my opinion on the religious aspect, but when I give you my views as to the poverty of India, you will perhaps begin to dislike me because what you and I have hitherto considered beneficial for India no longer appears to me to be so.

READER: What may that be?

EDITOR: Railways, lawyers and doctors have

impoverished the country so much so that, if we do not wake up in time, we shall be ruined

READER I do now, indeed, fear that we are not likely to agree at all You are attacking the very institutions which we have hitherto considered to be good

EDITOR It is necessary to exercise patience. The true inwardness of the evils of civilization you will understand with difficulty Doctors assure us that a consumptive clings to life even when he is about to die Consumption does not produce apparent hurt—it even produces a seductive colour about a patient's face so as to induce the belief that all is well Civilization is such a disease and we have to be very wary

READER Very well, then I shall hear you on the railways

EDITOR It must be manifest to you that, but for the railways, the English could not have such a hold on India as they have The railways, too, have spread the bubonic plague Without them, the masses could not move from place to place They are the carriers of plague germs Formerly we had natural segregation Railways have also increased the frequency of famines because, owing to facility of means of locomotion, people sell out their grain and it is sent to the dearest markets People become careless and so the pressure of famine increases Railways accentuate the evil nature of man Bad men fulfil their evil designs with greater rapidity The holy



places of India have become unholy. Formerly, people went to these places with very great difficulty. Generally, therefore, only the real devotees visited such places. Nowadays rogues visit them in order to practise their roguery.

READER. You have given a one-sided account. Good men can visit these places as well as bad men. Why do they not take the fullest advantage of the railways?

EDITOR. Good travels at a snail's pace—it can, therefore, have little to do with the railways. Those who want to do good are not selfish, they are not in a hurry, they know that to impregnate people with good requires a long time. But evil has wings. To build a house takes time. Its destruction takes none. So the railways can become a distributing agency for the evil one only. It may be a debatable matter whether railways spread famines, but it is beyond dispute that they propagate evil.

READER: Be that as it may, all the disadvantages of railways are more than counterbalanced by the fact that it is due to them that we see in India the new spirit of nationalism.

EDITOR: I hold this to be a mistake. The English have taught us that we were not one nation before and that it will require centuries before we become one nation. This is without foundation. We were one nation before they came to India. One thought inspired us. Our mode of life was the same. It was because we were one nation that they were able to

establish one kingdom Subsequently they divided us

READER: This requires an explanation

EDITOR I do not wish to suggest that because we were one nation we had no differences, but it is submitted that our leading men travelled throughout India either on foot or in bullock-carts They learned one another's languages and there was no aloofness between them What do you think could have been the intention of those farseeing ancestors of ours who established Setubandha (Rameshwar) in the South, Jagunnath in the East and Hrudwar in the North as places of pilgrimage? You will admit they were no fools They knew that worship of God could have been performed just as well at home They taught us that those whose hearts were aglow with righteousness had the Ganges in their own homes But they saw that India was one undivided land so made by nature They, therefore, argued that it must be one nation Arguing thus, they established holy places in various parts of India, and fired the people with an idea of nationality in a manner unknown in other parts of the world. And we Indians are one as no two Englishmen are Only you and I and others who consider ourselves civilized and superior persons imagine that we are many nations It was after the advent of railways that we began to believe in distinctions, and you are at liberty now to say that it is through the railways that we are beginning to abolish those distinctions An opium-eater may argue the advantage of opium-eating from

the fact that he began to understand the evil of the opium habit after having eaten it. I would ask you to consider well what I had said on the railways.

READER: I will gladly do so, but one question occurs to me even now. You have described to me the India of the pre-Mahomedan period, but now we have Mahomedans, Parsis and Christians. How can they be one nation? Hindus and Mahomedans are old enemies. Our very proverbs prove it Mahomedans turn to the West for worship, whilst Hindus turn to the East. The former look down on the Hindus as idolaters. The Hindus worship the cow, the Mahomedans kill her. The Hindus believe in the doctrine of non-killing, the Mahomedans do not. We thus meet with differences at every step. How can India be one nation?

THE CONDITION OF INDIA (CONTINUED)  
THE HINDUS AND THE MAHOMEDANS

EDITOR Your last question is a serious one and yet, on careful consideration, it will be found to be easy of solution. The question arises because of the presence of the railways, of the lawyers and of the doctors. We shall presently examine the last two. We have already considered the railways. I should, however, like to add that man is so made by nature as to require him to restrict his movements as far as his hands and feet will take him. If we did not rush about from place to place by means of railways and such other maddening conveniences, much of the confusion that arises would be obviated. Our difficulties are of our own creation. God set a limit to a man's locomotive ambition in the construction of his body. Man immediately proceeded to discover means of overriding the limit. God gifted man with intellect that he might know his Maker. Man abused it so that he might forget his Maker. I am so constructed that I can only serve my immediate neighbours, but in my conceit I pretend to have discovered that I must with my body serve every individual in the Universe. In thus attempting the impossible, man comes in contact with different natures, different religions, and is utterly confounded. According to this reasoning, it must be apparent to you that railways

are a most dangerous institution. Owing to them, man has gone further away from his Maker.

READER: But I am impatient to hear your answer to my question. Has the introduction of Mahomedanism not unmade the nation?

EDITOR: India cannot cease to be one nation because people belonging to different religions live in it. The introduction of foreigners does not necessarily destroy the nation, they merge in it. A country is one nation only when such a condition obtains in it. That country must have a faculty for assimilation. India has ever been such a country. In reality there are as many religions as there are individuals; but those who are conscious of the spirit of nationality do not interfere with one another's religion. If they do, they are not fit to be considered a nation. If the Hindus believe that India should be peopled only by Hindus, they are living in dream-land. The Hindus, the Mahomedans, the Parsis and the Christians who have made India their country are fellow-countrymen, and they will have to live in unity, if only for their own interest. In no part of the world are one nationality and one religion synonymous terms, nor has it ever been so in India.

READER: But what about the inborn enmity between Hindus and Mahomedans?

EDITOR: That phrase has been invented by our mutual enemy. When the Hindus and Mahomedans fought against one another, they certainly spoke in that strain. They have long since ceased to fight.

How, then, can there be any inborn enmity? Pray remember this too, that we did not cease to fight only after British occupation. The Hindus flourished under Moslem sovereigns and Moslems under the Hindu. Each party recognized that mutual fighting was suicidal, and that neither party would abandon its religion by force of arms. Both parties, therefore, decided to live in peace. With the English advent quarrels recommenced.

The proverbs you have quoted were coined when both were fighting, to quote them now is obviously harmful. Should we not remember that many Hindus and Mahomedans own the same ancestors and the same blood runs through their veins? Do people become enemies because they change their religion? Is the God of the Mahomedan different from the God of the Hindu? Religions are different roads converging to the same point. What does it matter that we take different roads so long as we reach the same goal? Wherein is the cause for quarrelling?

Moreover, there are deadly proverbs as between the followers of Siva and those of Vishnu, yet nobody suggests that these two do not belong to the same nation. It is said that the Vedic religion is different from Jainism, but the followers of the respective faiths are not different nations. The fact is that we have become enslaved and, therefore, quarrel and like to have our quarrels decided by a third party. There are Hindu iconoclasts as there are Mahomedan. The more we advance in true

knowledge, the better we shall understand that we need not be at war with those whose religion we may not follow.

READER: Now I would like to know your views about cow-protection

EDITOR. I myself respect the cow, that is, I look upon her with affectionate reverence. The cow is the protector of India because, being an agricultural country, she is dependent on the cow. The cow is a most useful animal in hundreds of ways. Our Mahomedan brethren will admit this.

But, just as I respect the cow, so do I respect my fellow-men. A man is just as useful as a cow no matter whether he be a Mahomedan or a Hindu. Am I, then, to fight with or kill a Mahomedan in order to save a cow? In doing so, I would become an enemy of the Mahomedan as well as of the cow. Therefore, the only method I know of protecting the cow is that I should approach my Mahomedan brother and urge him for the sake of the country to join me in protecting her. If he would not listen to me I should let the cow go for the simple reason that the matter is beyond my ability. If I were overfull of pity for the cow, I should sacrifice my life to save her but not take my brother's. This, I hold, is the law of our religion.

When men become obstinate, it is a difficult thing. If I pull one way, my Moslem brother will pull another. If I put on a superior air, he will return the compliment. If I bow to him gently, he will do it

much more so, and if he does not, I shall not be considered to have done wrong in having bowed. When the Hindus became insistent, the killing of cows increased. In my opinion, cow-protection societies may be considered cow-killing societies. It is a disgrace to us that we should need such societies. When we forgot how to protect cows, I suppose we needed such societies.

What am I to do when a blood-brother is on the point of killing a cow? Am I to kill him, or to fall down at his feet and implore him? If you admit that I should adopt the latter course, I must do the same to my Moslem brother.

Who protects the cow from destruction by Hindus when they cruelly ill-treat her? Whoever reasons with the Hindus when they mercilessly belabour the progeny of the cow with their sticks? But this has not prevented us from remaining one nation.

Lastly, if it is true that the Hindus believe in the doctrine of non-killing and the Mahomedans do not, what, pray, is the duty of the former? It is not written that a follower of the religion of Ahimsa (non-killing) may kill a fellow-man. For him the way is straight. In order to save one being, he may not kill another. He can only plead—therein lies his sole duty.

But does every Hindu believe in Ahimsa? Going to the root of the matter, not one man really practises such a religion because we do destroy life. We are said to follow that religion because we want to obtain



freedom from liability to kill any kind of life. Generally speaking, we may observe that many Hindus partake of meat and are not, therefore, followers of Ahimsa. It is, therefore, preposterous to suggest that the two cannot live together amicably because the Hindus believe in Ahimsa and the Mahomedans do not.

These thoughts are put into our minds by selfish and false religious teachers. The English put the finishing touch. They have habit of writing history; they pretend to study the manners and customs of all peoples. God has given us a limited mental capacity, but they usurp the function of the Godhead and indulge in novel experiments. They write about their own researches in most laudatory terms and hypnotize us into believing them. We in our ignorance then fall at their feet.

Those who do not wish to misunderstand things may read up the Koran, and they will find therein hundreds of passages acceptable to the Hindus, and the Bhagavadgita contains passages to which not a Mahomedan can take exception. Am I to dislike a Mahomedan because there are passages in the Koran I do not understand or like? It takes two to make a quarrel. If I do not want to quarrel with a Mahomedan, the latter will be powerless to foment a quarrel on me, and, similarly, I should be powerless if a Mahomedan refuses his assistance to quarrel with me. An arm striking the air will become disappointed. If everyone will try to understand the core of his own religion and adhere to it, and will not allow false

teachers to dictate to him, there will be no room left for quarrelling

READER But will the English ever allow the two bodies to join hands?

EDITOR This question arises out of your timidity. It betrays our shallowness. If two brothers want to live in peace, is it possible for a third party to separate them? If they were to listen to evil counsels we would consider them to be foolish. Similarly, we Hindus and Mahomedans would have to blame our folly rather than the English, if we allowed them to put us asunder. A clay pot would break through impact, if not with one stone, then with another. The way to save the pot is not to keep it away from the danger point but to bake it so that no stone would break it. We have then to make our hearts of perfectly baked clay. Then we shall be steeled against all danger. This can be easily done by the Hindus. They are superior in numbers, they pretend that they are more educated, they are, therefore, better able to shield themselves from attack on their amicable relations with the Mahomedans.

There is mutual distrust between the two communities. The Mahomedans, therefore, ask for certain concessions from Lord Morley. Why should the Hindus oppose this? If the Hindus desisted, the English would notice it, the Mahomedans would gradually begin to trust the Hindus, and brotherliness would be the outcome. We should be ashamed to take our quarrels to the English. Everyone can

find out for himself that the Hindus can lose nothing by desisting. That man who has inspired confidence in another has never lost anything in this world

I do not suggest that the Hindus and the Mahomedans will never fight. Two brothers living together often do so. We shall sometimes have our heads broken. Such a thing ought not to be necessary, but all men are not equitable. When people are in a rage, they do many foolish things. These we have to put up with. But when we do quarrel, we certainly do not want to engage counsel and resort to English or any law-courts. Two men fight, both have their heads broken, or one only. How shall a third party distribute justice amongst them? Those who fight may expect to be injured.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE CONDITION OF INDIA (CONTINUED) LAWYERS

READER. You tell me that when two men quarrel they should not go to a law-court. This is astonishing.

EDITOR. Whether you call it astonishing or not, it is the truth. And your question introduces us to the lawyers and the doctors. My firm opinion is that the lawyers have enslaved India, have accentuated Hindu-Mahomedan dissensions and have confirmed English authority.

READER. It is easy enough to bring these charges, but it will be difficult for you to prove them.

But for the lawyers, who would have shown us the road to independence? Who would have protected the poor? Who would have secured justice? For instance, the late Manomohan Ghose defended many a poor man free of charge. The Congress, which you have praised so much is dependent for its existence and activity upon the work of the lawyers. To denounce such an estimable class of men is to spell injustice, and you are abusing the liberty of the press by decrying lawyers.

EDITOR At one time I used to think exactly like you. I have no desire to convince you that they have never done a single good thing. I honour Mr Ghose's memory. It is quite true that he helped the poor. That the Congress owes the lawyers something is believable. Lawyers are also men, and there is something good in every man. Whenever instances of lawyers having done good can be brought forward, it will be found that the good is due to them as men rather than as lawyers. All I am concerned with is to show you that the profession teaches immorality, it is exposed to temptation from which few are saved.

The Hindus and the Mahomedans have quarrelled. An ordinary man will ask them to forget all about it, he will tell them that both must be more or less at fault, and will advise them no longer to quarrel. But they go to lawyers. The latter's duty is to side with their clients and to find out ways and arguments in favour of the clients to which they (the clients) are often strangers. If they do not do so they will be

considered to have degraded their profession. The lawyers, therefore, will, as a rule, advance quarrels instead of repressing them. Moreover, men take up that profession, not in order to help others out of their miseries, but to enrich themselves. It is one of the avenues of becoming wealthy and their interest exists in multiplying disputes. It is within my knowledge that they are glad when men have disputes. Petty pleaders actually manufacture them. Their touts, like so many leeches, suck the blood of the poor people. Lawyers are men who have little to do. Lazy people, in order to indulge in luxuries, take up such professions. This is a true statement. Any other argument is a mere pretension. It is the lawyers who have discovered that theirs is an honourable profession. They frame laws as they frame their own praises. They decide what fees they will charge and they put on so much side that poor people almost consider them to be heaven-born.

Why do they want more fees than common labourers? Why are their requirements greater? In what way are they more profitable to the country than the labourers? Are those who do good entitled to greater payment? And, if they have done anything for the country for the sake of money, how shall it be counted as good?

Those who know anything of the Hindu-Mahomedan quarrels know that they have been often due to the intervention of lawyers. Some families have been ruined through them, they have made brothers

enemies Principalities, having come under the lawyers' power, have become loaded with debt Many have been robbed of their all Such instances can be multiplied

But the greatest injury they have done to the country is that they have tightened the English grip Do you think that it would be possible for the English to carry on their Government without law courts? It is wrong to consider that courts are established for the benefit of the people Those who want to perpetuate their power do so through the courts If people were to settle their own quarrels, a third party would not be able to exercise any authority over them Truly, men were less unmanly when they settled their disputes either by fighting or by asking their relatives to decide for them They became more unmanly and cowardly when they resorted to the courts of law It was certainly a sign of savagery when they settled their disputes by fighting Is it any the less so, if I ask a third party to decide between you and me? Surely, the decision of a third party is not always right The parties alone know who is right We, in our simplicity and ignorance, imagine that a stranger, by taking our money, gives us justice

The chief thing, however, to be remembered is that without lawyers courts could not have been established or conducted and without the latter the English could not rule Supposing that there were only English judges, English pleaders and English police, they could only rule over the English. The English

could not do without Indian judges and Indian pleaders. How the pleaders were made in the first instance and how they were favoured you should understand well. Then you will have the same abhorrence for the profession that I have. If pleaders were to abandon their profession, and consider it just as degrading as prostitution, English rule would break up in a day. They have been instrumental in having the charge laid against us that we love quarels and courts as fish love water. What I have said with reference to the pleaders necessarily applies to the judges, they are first cousins, and the one gives strength to the other.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE CONDITION OF INDIA (CONTINUED). DOCTORS

READER. I now understand the lawyers, the good they may have done is accidental. I feel that profession is certainly hateful. You, however, drag in the doctors also, how is that?

EDITOR. The views I submit to you are those I have adopted. They are not original. Western writers have used stronger terms regarding both lawyers and doctors. One writer has linked the whole modern system to the Upas tree. Its branches are represented by parasitical professions, including those of law and medicine, and over the trunk has been raised the axe of true religion. Immorality is the root of the tree. So you will see that the views do not come right out

of command but represent the combined experience of many. I was at one time a great lover of the medical profession. It was my intention to become a doctor in the life of the country. I no longer hold that opinion. I now understand why the medicine men are so much more generally respected—very honourable men.

The Lash has certainly effectively used the medical profession in punishing us. English physicians are known to have used their profession with several American students for political reasons.

Doctors have certainly punished us. Sometimes I think that quacks are better than highly qualified doctors. Let us consider, for instance, what a doctor is to take care of our body, or a properly speaking, not even that. The medicine is really to rid the body of diseases that may afflict it. How do these diseases arise? Surely by our negligence or indulgence. I overeat, I have indigestion. I go to a doctor, he gives me medicine, I am cured. I overeat again, I take his pills again. Had I not taken the pills in the first instance, I would have suffered the punishment deserved by me and I would not have overeaten again. The doctor intervened and helped me to indulge myself. My body thereby certainly felt more at ease, but my mind became weakened. A continuance of a course of medicine must, therefore, result in loss of control over the mind.

I have indulged in vice, I contract a disease, a doctor cures me, the odds are that I shall repeat the



vice. Had the doctor not intervened, nature would have done its work, and I would have acquired mastery over myself, would have been freed from vice and would have become happy

Hospitals are institutions for propagating sin. Men take less care of their bodies and immorality increases. European doctors are the worst of all. For the sake of a mistaken care of the human body, they kill annually thousands of animals. They practise vivisection. No religion sanctions this. All say that it is not necessary to take so many lives for the sake of our bodies.

These doctors violate our religious instinct. Most of their medical preparations contain either animal fat or spirituous liquors; both of these are tabooed by Hindus and Mahomedans. We may pretend to be civilized, call religious prohibitions a superstition and wantonly indulge in what we like. The fact remains that the doctors induce us to indulge, and the result is that we have become deprived of self-control and have become effeminate. In these circumstances, we are unfit to serve the country. To study European medicine is to deepen our slavery.

It is worth considering why we take up the profession of medicine. It is certainly not taken up for the purpose of serving humanity. We become doctors so that we may obtain honours and riches. I have endeavoured to show that there is no real service of humanity in the profession, and that it is injurious to mankind. Doctors make a show of their knowledge, and

charge exorbitant fees Their preparations, which are intrinsically worth a few pence, cost shillings The populace, in its credulity and in the hope of ridding itself of some disease, allows itself to be cheated Are not quacks then whom we know, better than the doctors who put on an air of humaneness ?

## CHAPTER XIII

## WHAT IS TRUE CIVILIZATION ?

READER You have denounced railways, lawyers and doctors I can see that you will discard all machinery What, then, is civilization ?

EDITOR The answer to that question is not difficult I believe that the civilization India has evolved is not to be beaten in the world Nothing can equal the seeds sown by our ancestors Rome went, Greece shared the same fate, the might of the Pharaohs was broken, Japan has become Westernized, of China nothing can be said; but India is still, somehow or other, sound at the foundation The people of Europe learn their lessons from the writings of the men of Greece or Rome, which exist no longer in their former glory In trying to learn from them, the Europeans imagine that they will avoid the mistakes of Greece and Rome Such is their pitiable condition In the midst of all this India remains immovable and that is her glory It is a charge against India that her people are so uncivilized, ignorant and stolid, that it is not possible to induce them to adopt any changes

It is a charge really against our merit. What we have tested and found true on the anvil of experience, we dare not change. Many thrust their advice upon India, and she remains steady. This is her beauty. It is the sheet-anchor of our hope.

Civilization is that mode of conduct which points out to man the path of duty. Performance of duty and observance of morality are convertible terms. To observe morality is to attain mastery over our mind and our passions. So doing, we know ourselves. The Gujarati equivalent for civilization means "good conduct".

If this definition be correct, then India, as so many writers have shown, has nothing to learn from anybody else, and this is as it should be. We notice that the mind is a restless bird, the more it gets the more it wants, and still remains unsatisfied. The more we indulge our passions the more unbridled they become. Our ancestors, therefore, set a limit to our indulgences. They saw that happiness was largely a mental condition. A man is not necessarily happy because he is rich, or unhappy because he is poor. The rich are often seen to be unhappy, the poor to be happy. Millions will always remain poor. Observing all this, our ancestors dissuaded us from luxuries and pleasures. We have managed with the same kind of plough as existed thousands of years ago. We have retained the same kind of cottages that we had in former times and our indigenous education remains the same as before. We have had no system of



agricultural occupation. They enjoyed true Home Rule

And where this cursed modern civilization has not reached, India remains as it was before. The inhabitants of that part of India will very properly laugh at your newfangled notions. The English do not rule over them, nor will you ever rule over them. Those in whose name we speak we do not know, nor do they know us. I would certainly advise you and those like you who love the motherland to go into the interior that has yet been not polluted by the railways and to live there for six months; you might then be patriotic and speak of Home Rule.

Now you see what I consider to be real civilization. Those who want to change conditions such as I have described are enemies of the country and are sinners.

READER. It would be all right if India were exactly as you have described it, but it is also India where there are hundreds of child widows, where two year old babies are married, where twelve year old girls are mothers and housewives, where women practise polyandry, where the practice of Niyoga obtains, where, in the name of religion, girls dedicate themselves to prostitution, and in the name of religion sheep and goats are killed. Do you consider these also symbols of the civilization that you have described?

EDITOR. You make a mistake. The defects that you have shown are defects. Nobody mistakes them for ancient civilization. They remain in spite of it.

Attempts have always been made and will be made to remove them. We may utilize the new spirit that is born in us for purging ourselves of these evils. But what I have described to you as emblems of modern civilization are accepted as such by its votaries. The Indian civilization, as described by me, has been so described by its votaries. In no part of the world, and under no civilization, have all men attained perfection. The tendency of the Indian civilization is to elevate the moral being, that of the Western civilization is to propagate immorality. The latter is godless, the former is based on a belief in God. So understanding and so believing, it behoves every lover of India to cling to the old Indian civilization even as a child clings to the mother's breast.

## HOW CAN INDIA BECOME FREE?

READER I appreciate your views about civilization. I will have to think over them I cannot take them in all at once What, then, holding the views you do, would you suggest for freeing India?

EDITOR I do not expect my views to be accepted all of a sudden My duty is to place them before readers like yourself Time can be trusted to do the rest. We have already examined the conditions for freeing India, but we have done so indirectly, we will now do so directly It is a world-known maxim that the removal of the cause of a disease results in the removal of the disease itself Similarly if the cause of India's slavery be removed, India can become free.

READER If Indian civilization is, as you say, the best of all, how do you account for India's slavery?

EDITOR This civilization is unquestionably the best, but it is to be observed that all civilizations have been on their trial That civilization which is permanent outlives it Because the sons of India were found wanting, its civilization has been placed in jeopardy. But its strength is to be seen in its ability to survive the shock Moreover, the whole of India is not touched Those alone who have been affected by Western civilization have become enslaved We measure the universe by our own miserable foot-rule When we are slaves, we think that the whole universe is

enslaved Because we are in an abject condition, we think that the whole of India is in that condition As a matter of fact, it is not so, yet it is as well to impute our slavery to the whole of India But if we bear in mind the above fact, we can see that if we become free, India is free And in this thought you have a definition of Swaraj It is Swaraj when we learn to rule ourselves It is, therefore, in the palm of our hands Do not consider this Swaraj to be like a dream There is no idea of sitting still The Swaraj that I wish to picture is such that, after we have once realized it, we shall endeavour to the end of our life-time to persuade others to do likewise But such Swaraj has to be experienced, by each one for himself One drowning man will never save another Slaves ourselves, it would be a mere pretension to think of freeing others Now you will have seen that it is not necessary for us to have as our goal the expulsion of the English If the English become Indianized, we can accommodate them If they wish to remain in India along with their civilization, there is no room for them It lies with us to bring about such a state of things

READER It is impossible that Englishmen should ever become Indianized

EDITOR To say that is equivalent to saying that the English have no humanity in them And it is really beside the point whether they become so or not If we keep our own house in order, only those who are fit to live in it will remain Others will leave of their



own accord. Such things occur within the experience of all of us

READER: But it has not occurred in history

EDITOR: To believe that what has not occurred in history will not occur at all is to argue disbelief in the dignity of man. At any rate, it behoves us to try what appeals to our reason. All countries are not similarly conditioned. The condition of India is unique. Its strength is immeasurable. We need not, therefore, refer to the history of other countries. I have drawn attention to the fact that, when other civilizations have succumbed, the Indian has survived many a shock.

READER: I cannot follow this. There seems little doubt that we shall have to expel the English by force of arms. So long as they are in the country we cannot rest. One of our poets says that slaves cannot even dream of happiness. We are day by day becoming weakened owing to the presence of the English. Our greatness is gone; our people look like terrified men. The English are in the country like a blight which we must remove by every means.

EDITOR: In your excitement, you have forgotten all we have been considering. We brought the English, and we keep them. Why do you forget that our adoption of their civilization makes their presence in India at all possible? Your hatred against them ought to be transferred to their civilization. But let us assume that we have to drive away the English by fighting, how is that to be done?

READER In the same way as Italy did it What was possible for Mazzini and Garibaldi is possible for us You cannot deny that they were very great men

## CHAPTER XV ITALY AND INDIA

EDITOR It is well that you have instanced Italy Mazzini was a great and good man, Garibaldi was a great warrior Both are adorable, from their lives we can learn much But the condition of Italy was different from that of India In the first instance, the difference between Mazzini and Garibaldi is worth noting Mazzini's ambition was not and has not yet been realized regarding Italy Mazzini has shown in his writings on the duty of man that every man must learn how to rule himself This has not happened in Italy Garibaldi did not hold this view of Mazzini's. Garibaldi gave, and every Italian took arms Italy and Austria had the same civilization, they were cousins in this respect It was a matter of tit for tat Garibaldi simply wanted Italy to be free from the Austrian yoke The machinations of Minister Cavour disgrace that portion of the history of Italy And what has been the result? If you believe that because Italians rule Italy the Italian nation is happy, you are groping in darkness Mazzini has shown conclusively that Italy did not become free. Victor Emanuel gave one meaning to the expression; Mazzini gave another. According to Emanuel, Cavour

and even Garibaldi, Italy meant the King of Italy and his henchmen. According to Mazzini, it meant the whole of the Italian people, that is, its agriculturists. Emanuel was only its servant. The Italy of Mazzini still remains in a state of slavery. At the time of the so-called national war, it was a game of chess between two rival kings with the people of Italy as pawns. The working classes in that land are still unhappy. They, therefore, indulge in assassination, rise in revolt, and rebellion on their part is always expected. What substantial gain did Italy obtain after the withdrawal of the Austrian troops? The gain was only nominal. The reforms for the sake of which the war was supposed to have been undertaken have not yet been granted. The condition of the people in general still remains the same. I am sure you do not wish to reproduce such a condition in India. I believe that you want the millions of India to be happy, not that you want the reins of Government in your hands. If that be so, we have to consider only one thing: how can the millions obtain self-rule? You will admit that people under several Indian princes are being ground down. The latter mercilessly crush them. Their tyranny is greater than that of the English, and if you want such tyranny in India, then we shall never agree. My patriotism does not teach me that I am to allow people to be crushed under the heel of Indian princes if only the English retire. If I have the power, I should resist the tyranny of Indian princes just as much as that of the

English By patriotism I mean the welfare of the whole people, and if I could secure it at the hands of the English, I should bow down my head to them. If any Englishman dedicated his life to securing the freedom of India, resisting tyranny and serving the land, I should welcome that Englishman as an Indian.

Again, India can fight like Italy only when she has arms. You have not considered this problem at all. The English are splendidly armed, that does not frighten me, but it is clear that, to pit ourselves against them in arms, thousands of Indians must be armed. If such a thing be possible, how many years will it take? Moreover, to arm India on a large scale is to Europeanize it. Then her condition will be just as pitiable as that of Europe. This means, in short, that India must accept European civilization, and if that is what we want, the best thing is that we have among us those who are so well trained in that civilization. We will then fight for a few rights, will get what we can and so pass our days. But the fact is that the Indian nation will not adopt arms, and it is well that it does not.

READER You are over-stating the facts. All need not be armed. At first, we shall assassinate a few Englishmen and strike terror, then, a few men who will have been armed will fight openly. We may have to lose a quarter of a million men, more or less, but we shall regain our land. We shall undertake guerilla warfare, and defeat the English.

EDITOR That is to say, you want to make the

holy land of India unholy. Do you not tremble to think of freeing India by assassination? What we need to do is to sacrifice ourselves. It is a cowardly thought, that of killing others. Whom do you suppose to free by assassination? The millions of India do not desire it. Those who are intoxicated by the wretched modern civilization think these things. Those who will rise to power by murder will certainly not make the nation happy. Those who believe that India has gained by Dhingra's act and other similar acts in India make a serious mistake. Dhingra was a patriot, but his love was blind. He gave his body in a wrong way; its ultimate result can only be mischievous.

READER: But you will admit that the English have been frightened by these murders, and that Lord Morley's reforms are due to fear.

EDITOR: The English are both a timid and a brave nation. England is, I believe, easily influenced by the use of gunpowder. It is possible that Lord Morley has granted the reforms through fear, but what is granted under fear can be retained only so long as the fear lasts.

## CHAPTER XVI

### BRUTE FORCE

READER This is a new doctrine, that what is gained through fear is retained only while the fear lasts. Surely, what is given will not be withdrawn?

EDITOR Not so The Proclamation of 1857 was given at the end of a revolt, and for the purpose of preserving peace. When peace was secured and people became simple-minded its full effect was toned down If I cease stealing for fear of punishment, I would recommence the operation as soon as the fear is withdrawn from me This is almost a universal experience We have assumed that we can get men to do things by force and, therefore, we use force

READER Will you not admit that you are arguing against yourself? You know that what the English obtained in their own country they obtained by using brute force I know you have argued that what they have obtained is useless, but that does not affect my argument They wanted useless things and they got them My point is that their desire was fulfilled What does it matter what means they adopted? Why should we not obtain our goal, which is good, by any means whatsoever, even by using violence? Shall I think of the means when I have to deal with a thief in the house? My duty is to drive him out anyhow You seem to admit that we have received nothing, and that we shall receive nothing by petitioning Why, then,

may we not do so by using brute force? And, to retain what we may receive we shall keep up the fear by using the same force to the extent that it may be necessary. You will not find fault with a continuance of force to prevent a child from thrusting its foot into fire? Somehow or other we have to gain our end.

EDITOR. Your reasoning is plausible. It has deluded many. I have used similar arguments before now. But I think I know better now, and I shall endeavour to undeceive you. Let us first take the argument that we are justified in gaining our end by using brute force because the English gained theirs by using similar means. It is perfectly true that they used brute force and that it is possible for us to do likewise, but by using similar means we can get only the same thing that they got. You will admit that we do not want that. Your belief that there is no connection between the means and the end is a great mistake. Through that mistake even men who have been considered religious have committed grievous crimes. Your reasoning is the same as saying that we can get a rose through planting a noxious weed. If I want to cross the ocean, I can do so only by means of a vessel; if I were to use a cart for that purpose, both the cart and I would soon find the bottom. "As is the God, so is the votary", is a maxim worth considering. Its meaning has been distorted and men have gone astray. The means may be likened to a seed, the end to a tree; and there is just the same inviolable

connection between the means and the end as there is between the seed and the tree I am not likely to obtain the result flowing from the worship of God by laying myself prostrate before Satan. If, therefore, anyone were to say "I want to worship God, it does not matter that I do so by means of Satan," it would be set down as ignorant folly. We reap exactly as we sow. The English in 1833 obtained greater voting power by violence. Did they by using brute force better appreciate their duty? They wanted the right of voting, which they obtained by using physical force. But real rights are a result of performance of duty, these rights they have not obtained. We, therefore, have before us in England the force of everybody wanting and insisting on his rights, nobody thinking of his duty. And, where everybody wants rights, who shall give them to whom? I do not wish to imply that they do no duties. They don't perform the duties corresponding to those rights, and as they do not perform that particular duty, namely, acquire fitness, their rights have proved a burden to them. In other words, what they have obtained is an exact result of the means they adopted. They used the means corresponding to the end. If I want to deprive you of your watch, I shall certainly have to fight for it, if I want to buy your watch, I shall have to pay you for it, and if I want a gift, I shall have to plead for it, and, according to the means I employ, the watch is stolen property, my own property, or a donation. Thus we see three different results



from three different means. Will you still say that means do not matter?

Now we shall take the example given by you of the thief to be driven out. I do not agree with you that the thief may be driven out by any means. If it is my father who has come to steal I shall use one kind of means. If it is an acquaintance I shall use another; and in the case of a perfect stranger I shall use a third. If it is a white man, you will perhaps say you will use means different from those you will adopt with an Indian thief. If it is a weakling, the means will be different from those to be adopted for dealing with an equal in physical strength, and if the thief is armed from top to toe, I shall simply remain quiet. Thus we have a variety of means between the father and the armed man. Again, I fancy that I should pretend to be sleeping whether the thief was my father or that strong armed man. The reason for this is that my father would also be armed and I should succumb to the strength possessed by either and allow my things to be stolen. The strength of my father would make me weep with pity; the strength of the armed man would rouse in me anger and we should become enemies. Such is the curious situation. From these examples we may not be able to agree as to the means to be adopted in each case. I myself seem clearly to see what should be done in all these cases, but the remedy may frighten you. I therefore hesitate to place it before you. For the time being I will leave you to guess it, and if you cannot, it is clear

you will have to adopt different means in each case. You will also have seen that any means will not avail to drive away the thief. You will have to adopt means to fit each case. Hence it follows that your duty is *not* to drive away the thief by any means you like.

Let us proceed a little further. That well-armed man has stolen your property; you have harboured the thought of his act; you are filled with anger, you argue that you want to punish that rogue, not for your own sake, but for the good of your neighbours; you have collected a number of armed men, you want to take his house by assault; he is duly informed of it, he runs away, he too is incensed. He collects his brother robbers, and sends you a defiant message that he will commit robbery in broad daylight. You are strong, you do not fear him, you are prepared to receive him. Meanwhile, the robber pesters your neighbours. They complain before you. You reply that you are doing all for their sake, you do not mind that your own goods have been stolen. Your neighbours reply that the robber never pestered them before, and that he commenced his depredations only after you declared hostilities against him. You are between Scylla and Charybdis. You are full of pity for the poor men. What they say is true. What are you to do? You will be disgraced if you now leave the robber alone. You, therefore, tell the poor men. "Never mind. Come, my wealth is yours, I will give you arms, I will teach you how to use them; you should belabour the rogue; don't you leave him

alone." And so the battle grows; the robbers increase in numbers; your neighbours have deliberately put themselves to inconvenience. Thus the result of wanting to take revenge upon the robber is that you have disturbed your own peace; you are in perpetual fear of being robbed and assaulted; your courage has given place to cowardice. If you will patiently examine the argument, you will see that I have not overdrawn the picture. This is one of the means. Now let us examine the other. You set this armed robber down as an ignorant brother; you intend to reason with him at a suitable opportunity you argue that he is, after all, a fellow-man, you do not know what prompted him to steal. You, therefore, decide that, when you can, you will destroy the man's motive for stealing. Whilst you are thus reasoning with yourself, the man comes again to steal. Instead of being angry with him you take pity on him. You think that this stealing habit must be a disease with him. Henceforth, you, therefore, keep your doors and windows open, you change your sleeping-place, and you keep your things in a manner most accessible to him. The robber comes again and is confused as all this is new to him, nevertheless, he takes away your things. But his mind is agitated. He inquires about you in the village, he comes to learn about your broad and loving heart, he repents, he begs your pardon, returns you your things, and leaves off the stealing habit. He becomes your servant, and you find for him honourable employment. This is

the second method Thus, you see, different means have brought about totally different results I do not wish to deduce from this that robbers will act in the above manner or that all will have the same pity and love like you, but I only wish to show that fair means alone can produce fair results, and that, at least in the majority of cases, if not indeed in all, the force of love and pity is infinitely greater than the force of arms There is harm in the exercise of brute force, never in that of pity

Now we will take the question of petitioning It is a fact beyond dispute that a petition, without the backing of force, is useless However, the late Justice Ranade used to say that petitions served a useful purpose because they were a means of 'educating people They give the latter an idea of their condition and warn the rulers From this point of view, they are not altogether useless A petition of an equal is a sign of courtesy, a petition from a slave is a symbol of his slavery A petition backed by force is a petition from an equal and, when he transmits his demand in the form of a petition, it testifies to his nobility Two kinds of force can back petitions "We shall hurt you if you do not give this," is one kind of force, it is the force of arms, whose evil results we have already examined The second kind of force can thus be stated "If you do not concede our demand, we shall be no longer your petitioners You can govern us only so long as we remain the governed, we shall no longer have any dealings with you "

The force implied in this may be described as love-force, soul-force, or, more popularly but less accurately, passive resistance. This force is indestructible. He who uses it perfectly understands his position. We have an ancient proverb which literally means: "One negative cures thirty-six diseases" The force of arms is powerless when matched against the force of love or the soul.

Now we shall take your last illustration, that of the child thrusting its foot into fire. It will not avail you. What do you really do to the child? Supposing that it can exert so much physical force that it renders you powerless and rushes into fire, then you cannot prevent it. There are only two remedies open to you—either you must kill it in order to prevent it from perishing in the flames, or you must give your own life because you do not wish to see it perish before your very eyes. You will not kill it. If your heart is not quite full of pity, it is possible that you will not surrender yourself by preceding the child and going into the fire yourself. You, therefore, helplessly allow it to go into the flames. Thus, at any rate, you are not using physical force. I hope you will not consider that it is still physical force, though of a low order, when you would forcibly prevent the child from rushing towards the fire if you could. That force is of a different order and we have to understand what it is.

Remember that, in thus preventing the child, you are minding entirely its own interest, you are

exercising authority for its sole benefit Your example does not apply to the English. In using brute force against the English you consult entirely your own, that is the national, interest There is no question here either of pity or of love If you say that the actions of the English, being evil, represent fire, and that they proceed to their actions through ignorance, and that therefore they occupy the position of a child and that you want to protect such a child, then you will have to overtake every evil action of that kind by whomsoever committed and, as in the case of the evil child, you will have to sacrifice yourself If you are capable of such immeasurable pity, I wish you well in its exercise

## CHAPTER XVII

## PASSIVE RESISTANCE

READER Is there any historical evidence as to the success of what you have called soul-force or truth-force? No instance seems to have happened of any nation having risen through soul-force I still think that the evil-doers will not cease doing evil without physical punishment.

EDITOR The poet Tulsidas has said. "Of religion, pity, or love, is the root, as egotism of the body. Therefore, we should not abandon pity so long as we are alive." This appears to me to be a scientific truth I believe in it as much as I believe in two and two being four The force of love is the same as the

force of the soul or truth. We have evidence of its working at every step. The universe would disappear without the existence of that force. But you ask for historical evidence. It is, therefore, necessary to know what history means. The Gujarati equivalent means: "It so happened". If that is the meaning of history, it is possible to give copious evidence. But, if it means the doings of kings and emperors, there can be no evidence of soul-force or passive resistance in such history. You cannot expect silver ore in a tin mine. History, as we know it, is a record of the wars of the world, and so there is a proverb among Englishmen that a nation which has no history, that is, no wars, is a happy nation. How kings played, how they became enemies of one another, how they murdered one another, is found accurately recorded in history, and if this were all that had happened in the world, it would have been ended long ago. If the story of the universe had commenced with wars, not a man would have been found alive today. Those people who have been warred against have disappeared as, for instance, the natives of Australia of whom hardly a man was left alive by the intruders. Mark, please, that these natives did not use soul-force in self-defence, and it does not require much foresight to know that the Australians will share the same fate as their victims "Those that take the sword shall perish by the sword." With us the proverb is that professional swimmers will find a watery grave.

The fact that there are so many men still alive

in the world shows that it is based not on the force of arms but on the force of truth or love. Therefore, the greatest and most unimpeachable evidence of the success of this force is to be found in the fact that, in spite of the wars of the world, it still lives on.

Thousands, indeed tens of thousands, depend for their existence on a very active working of this force. Little quarrels of millions of families in their daily lives disappear before the exercise of this force. Hundreds of nations live in peace. History does not and cannot take note of this fact. History is really a record of every interruption of the even working of the force of love or of the soul. Two brothers quarrel, one of them repents and re-awakens the love that was lying dormant in him, the two again begin to live in peace, nobody takes note of this. But if the two brothers, through the intervention of solicitors or some other reason take up arms or go to law—which is another form of the exhibition of brute force,—their doings would be immediately noticed in the press, they would be the talk of their neighbours and would probably go down to history. And what is true of families and communities is true of nations. There is no reason to believe that there is one law for families and another for nations. History, then, is a record of an interruption of the course of nature. Soul-force, being natural, is not noted in history.

READER According to what you say, it is plain that instances of this kind of passive resistance are not to be found in history. It is necessary to



understand this passive resistance more fully. It will be better, therefore, if you enlarge upon it.

EDITOR: Passive resistance is a method of securing rights by personal suffering; it is the reverse of resistance by arms. When I refuse to do a thing that is repugnant to my conscience, I use soul-force. For instance, the Government of the day has passed a law which is applicable to me. I do not like it. If by using violence I force the Government to repeal the law, I am employing what may be termed body-force. If I do not obey the law and accept the penalty for its breach, I use soul-force. It involves sacrifice of self.

Everybody admits that sacrifice of self is infinitely superior to sacrifice of others. Moreover, if this kind of force is used in a cause that is unjust, only the person using it suffers. He does not make others suffer for his mistakes. Men have before now done many things which were subsequently found to have been wrong. No man can claim that he is absolutely in the right or that a particular thing is wrong because he thinks so, but it is wrong for him so long as that is his deliberate judgement. It is therefore meet that he should not do that which he knows to be wrong, and suffer the consequence whatever it may be. This is the key to the use of soul-force.

READER. You would then disregard laws—this is rank disloyalty. We have always been considered a law-abiding nation. You seem to be going even beyond the extremists. They say that we must obey

the laws that have been passed, but that if the laws be bad, we must drive out the law-givers even by force

EDITOR. Whether I go beyond them or whether I do not is a matter of no consequence to either of us We simply want to find out what is right and to act accordingly The real meaning of the statement that we are a law-abiding nation is that we are passive resisters When we do not like certain laws, we do not break the heads of law-givers but we suffer and do not submit to the laws That we should obey laws whether good or bad is a newfangled notion. There was no such thing in former days The people disregarded those laws they did not like and suffered the penalties for their breach. It is contrary to our manhood if we obey laws repugnant to our conscience Such teaching is opposed to religion and means slavery If the Government were to ask us to go about without any clothing, should we do so? If I were a passive resister, I would say to them that I would have nothing to do with their law. But we have so forgotten ourselves and become so complacent that we do not mind any degrading law.

A man who has realized his manhood, who fears only God, will fear no one else Man-made laws are not necessarily binding on him Even the Government does not expect any such thing from us They do not say "You must do such and such a thing," but they say "If you do not do it, we will punish you" We are sunk so low that we fancy that it is our duty and

our religion to do what the law lays down. If man will only realize that it is unmanly to obey laws that are unjust, no man's tyranny will enslave him. This is the key to self-rule or home-rule.

It is a superstition and ungodly thing to believe that an act of a majority binds a minority. Many examples can be given in which acts of majorities will be found to have been wrong and those of minorities to have been right. All reforms owe their origin to the initiation of minorities in opposition to majorities. If among a band of robbers a knowledge of robbing is obligatory, is a pious man to accept the obligation? So long as the superstition that men should obey unjust laws exists, so long will their slavery exist. And a passive resister alone can remove such a superstition.

To use brute force, to use gunpowder, is contrary to passive resistance, for it means that we want our opponent to do by force that which we desire but he does not. And if such a use of force is justifiable, surely he is entitled to do likewise by us. And so we should never come to an agreement. We may simply fancy, like the blind horse moving in a circle round a mill, that we are making progress. Those who believe that they are not bound to obey laws which are repugnant to their conscience have only the remedy of passive resistance open to them. Any other must lead to disaster.

READER : From what you say I deduce that passive resistance is a splendid weapon of the weak, but

that when they are strong they may take up arms

EDITOR. This is gross ignorance Passive resistance, that is, soul-force, is matchless It is superior to the force of arms How, then, can it be considered only a weapon of the weak? Physical-force men are strangers to the courage that is requisite in a passive resister Do you believe that a coward can ever disobey a law that he dislikes? Extremists are considered to be advocates of brute force Why do they, then, talk about obeying laws? I do not blame them. They can say nothing else When they succeed in driving out the English and they themselves become governors, they will want you and me to obey their laws And that is a fitting thing for their constitution But a passive resister will say he will not obey a law that is against his conscience, even though he may be blown to pieces at the mouth of a cannon

What do you think? Wherein is courage required—in blowing others to pieces from behind a cannon, or with a smiling face to approach a cannon and be blown to pieces? Who is the true warrior—he who keeps death always as a bosom-friend, or he who controls the death of others? Believe me that a man devoid of courage and manhood can never be a passive resister.

This however, I will admit that even a man weak in body is capable of offering this resistance One man can offer it just as well as millions Both men and women can indulge in it It does not

require the training of an army; it needs no jiu-jitsu. Control over the mind is alone necessary, and when that is attained, man is free like the king of the forest and his very glance withers the enemy.

Passive resistance is an all-sided sword, it can be used anyhow; it blesses him who uses it and him against whom it is used. Without drawing a drop of blood it produces far-reaching results. It never rusts and cannot be stolen. Competition between passive resisters does not exhaust. The sword of passive resistance does not require a scabbard. It is strange indeed that you should consider such a weapon to be a weapon merely of the weak.

READER: You have said that passive resistance is a speciality of India. Have cannons never been used in India?

EDITOR: Evidently, in your opinion, India means its few princes. To me it means its teeming millions on whom depends the existence of its princes and our own.

Kings will always use their kingly weapons. To use force is bred in them. They want to command, but those who have to obey commands do not want guns and these are in a majority throughout the world. They have to learn either body-force or soul-force. Where they learn the former, both the rulers and the ruled become like so many madmen; but but where they learn soul-force, the commands of the rulers do not go beyond the point of their swords, for true men disregard unjust commands.

Peasants have never been subdued by the sword, and never will be. They do not know the use of the sword, and they are not frightened by the use of it by others. That nation is great which rests its head upon death as its pillow. Those who defy death are free from all fear. For those who are labouring under the delusive charms of brute-force, this picture is not overdrawn. The fact is that, in India, the nation at large has generally used passive resistance in all departments of life. We cease to co-operate with our rulers when they displease us. This is passive resistance.

I remember an instance when, in a small principality, the villagers were offended by some command issued by the prince. The former immediately began vacating the village. The prince became nervous, apologized to his subjects and withdrew his command. Many such instances can be found in India. Real Home Rule is possible only where passive resistance is the guiding force of the people. Any other rule is foreign rule.

READER. Then you will say that it is not at all necessary for us to train the body?

EDITOR. I will certainly not say any such thing. It is difficult to become a passive resister unless the body is trained. As a rule, the mind, residing in a body that has become weakened by pampering, is also weak, and where there is no strength of mind there can be no strength of soul. We shall have to improve our physique by getting rid of infant

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marriages and luxurious living. If I were to ask a man with a shattered body to face a cannon's mouth I should make a laughing-stock of myself.

READER: From what you say, then, it would appear that it is not a small thing to become a passive resister, and, if that is so, I should like you to explain how a man may become one.

EDITOR: To become a passive resister is easy enough but it is also equally difficult. I have known a lad of fourteen years become a passive resister, I have known also sick people do likewise; and I have also known physically strong and otherwise happy people unable to take up passive resistance. After a great deal of experience it seems to me that those who want to become passive resisters for the service of the country have to observe perfect chastity, adopt poverty, follow truth, and cultivate fearlessness.

Chastity is one of the greatest disciplines without which the mind cannot attain requisite firmness. A man who is unchaste loses stamina, becomes emasculated and cowardly. He whose mind is given over to animal passions is not capable of any great effort. This can be proved by innumerable instances. What, then, is a married person to do is the question that arises naturally; and yet it need not. When a husband and wife gratify the passions, it is no less an animal indulgence on that account. Such an indulgence, except for perpetuating the race, is strictly prohibited. But a passive resister has to avoid even

that very limited indulgence because he can have no desire for progeny. A married man, therefore, can observe perfect chastity. This subject is not capable of being treated at greater length. Several questions arise. How is one to carry one's wife with one, what are her rights, and other similar questions. Yet those who wish to take part in a great work are bound to solve these puzzles.

Just as there is necessity for chastity, so is there for poverty. Pecuniary ambition and passive resistance cannot well go together. Those who have money are not expected to throw it away, but they *are* expected to be indifferent about it. They must be prepared to lose every penny rather than give up passive resistance.

Passive resistance has been described in the course of our discussion as truth-force. Truth, therefore, has necessarily to be followed and that at any cost. In this connection, academic questions such as whether a man may not lie in order to save a life, etc., arise, but these questions occur only to those who wish to justify lying. Those who want to follow truth every time are not placed in such a quandary, and if they are, they are still saved from a false position.

Passive resistance cannot proceed a step without fearlessness. Those alone can follow the path of passive resistance who are free from fear, whether as to their possessions, false honour, their relatives, the government, bodily injuries or death.

These observances are not to be abandoned in



the belief that they are difficult. Nature has implanted in the human breast ability to cope with any difficulty or suffering that may come to man unprovoked. These qualities are worth having, even for those who do not wish to serve the country. Let there be no mistake, as those who want to train themselves in the use of arms are also obliged to have these qualities more or less. Everybody does not become a warrior for the wish. A would-be warrior will have to observe chastity and to be satisfied with poverty as his lot. A warrior without fearlessness cannot be conceived of. It may be thought that he would not need to be exactly truthful, but that quality follows real fearlessness. When a man abandons truth, he does so owing to fear in some shape or form. The above four attributes, then, need not frighten anyone. It may be as well here to note that a physical-force man has to have many other useless qualities which a passive resister never needs. And you will find that whatever extra effort a swordsman needs is due to lack of fearlessness. If he is an embodiment of the latter, the sword will drop from his hand that very moment. He does not need its support. One who is free from hatred requires no sword. A man with a stick suddenly came face to face with a lion and instinctively raised his weapon in self-defence. The man saw that he had only prated about fearlessness when there was none in him. That moment he dropped the stick and found himself free from all fear.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### EDUCATION

READER In the whole of our discussion you have not demonstrated the necessity for education, we always complain of its absence among us. We notice a movement for compulsory education in our country. The Maharaja Gackwar has introduced it in his territories. Every eye is directed towards them. We bless the Maharaja for it. Is all this effort then of no use?

EDITOR If we consider our civilization to be the highest, I have regretfully to say that much of the effort you have described is of no use. The motive of the Maharaja and other great leaders who have been working in this direction is perfectly pure. They, therefore, undoubtedly deserve great praise. But we cannot conceal from ourselves the result that is likely to flow from their effort.

What is the meaning of education? It simply means a knowledge of letters. It is merely an instrument, and an instrument may be well used or abused. The same instrument that may be used to cure a patient may be used to take his life, and so on. Knowledge of letters. We daily observe that many men abuse it and very few men go to the root of the matter. If this is a correct statement, we have proved that the harm has been done by it that is too

It is only by the proper use of education that we can

ledge of letters. To teach boys reading, writing and arithmetic is called primary education. A peasant earns his bread honestly. He has ordinary knowledge of the world. He knows fairly well how he should behave towards his parents, his wife, his children and his fellow villagers. He understands and observes the rules of morality. But he cannot write his own name. What do you propose to do by giving him a knowledge of letters? Will you add an inch to his happiness? Do you wish to make him discontented with his cottage or his lot? And even if you want to do that, he will not need such an education. Carried away by the flood of western thought we came to the conclusion, without weighing *pros* and *cons*, that we should give this kind of education to the people.

Now let us take higher education. I have learned Geography, Astronomy, Algebra, Geometry, etc. What of that? In what way have I benefited myself or those around me? Why have I learned these things? Professor Huxley has thus defined education: "That man I think has had a liberal education who has been so trained in youth that his body is the ready servant of his will and does with ease and pleasure all the work that as a mechanism it is capable of, whose intellect is a clear, cold, logic engine with all its parts of equal strength and in smooth working order . . . whose mind is stored with a knowledge of the fundamental truths of nature . . . whose passions are trained to come to heel by a vigorous will, the servant of a tender conscience

. who has learnt to hate all vileness and to respect others as himself Such a one and no other, I conceive, has had a liberal education, for he is in harmony with nature He will make the best of her and she of him ”

If this is true education, I must emphatically say that the sciences I have enumerated above I have never been able to use for controlling my senses Therefore, whether you take elementary education or higher education, it is not required for the main thing It does not make men of us It does not enable us to do our duty

READER If that is so, I shall have to ask you another question What enables you to tell all these things to me ? If you had not received higher education, how would you have been able to explain to me the things that you have ?

EDITOR You have spoken well But my answer is simple I do not for one moment believe that my life would have been wasted, had I not received higher or lower education Nor do I consider that I necessarily serve because I speak But I do desire to serve and in endeavouring to fulfil that desire, I make use of the education I have received And, if I am making good use of it, even then it is not for the millions, but I can use it only for such as you, and this supports my contention Both you and I have come under the bane of what is mainly false education I claim to have become free from its ill effect, and I am trying to give you the benefit of my

experience and in doing so, I am demonstrating the rottenness of this education.

Moreover, I have not run down a knowledge of letters in all circumstances. All I have now shown is that we must not make of it a fetish. It is not our *Kamadruk*. In its place it can be of use and it has its place when we have brought our senses under subjection and put our ethics on a firm foundation. And then, if we feel inclined to receive that education, we may make good use of it. As an ornament it is likely to sit well on us. It now follows that it is not necessary to make this education compulsory. Our ancient school system is enough. Character-building has the first place in it and that is primary education. A building erected on that foundation will last

READER. Do I then understand that you do not consider English education necessary for obtaining Home Rule?

EDITOR. My answer is yes and no. To give millions a knowledge of English is to enslave them. The foundation that Macaulay laid of education has enslaved us. I do not suggest that he has any such intention, but that has been the result. Is it not a sad commentary that we should have to speak of Home Rule in a foreign tongue?

And it is worthy of note that the systems which the Europeans have discarded are the systems in vogue among us. Their learned men continually make changes. We ignorantly adhere to their cast-off systems. They are trying each division to improve its

own status. Wales is a small portion of England. Great efforts are being made to receive a knowledge of Welsh among Welshmen. The English Chancellor, Mr. Lloyd George is taking a leading part in the movement to make Welsh children speak Welsh. And what is our condition? We write to each other in faulty English, and from this even our M A s are not free, our best thoughts are expressed in English, the proceedings of our Congress are conducted in English, our best newspapers are printed in English. If this state of things continues for a long time, posterity will—it is my firm opinion—condemn and curse us.

It is worth noting that, by receiving English education, we have enslaved the nation. Hypocrisy, tyranny, etc., have increased, English-knowing Indians have not hesitated to cheat and strike terror into the people. Now, if we are doing anything for the people at all, we are paying only a portion of the debt due to them.

Is it not a painful thing that, if I want to go to a court of justice, I must employ the English language as a medium, that when I become a barrister, I may not speak my mother tongue and that someone else should have to translate to me from my own language? Is not this absolutely absurd? Is it not a sign of slavery? Am I to blame the English for it or myself? It is we, the English-knowing Indians, that have enslaved India. The curse of the nation will rest not upon the English but upon us.

I have told you that my answer to your last

question is both yes and no. I have explained to you why it is yes. I shall now explain why it is no.

We are so much beset by the disease of civilization, that we cannot altogether do without English-education. Those who have already received it may make good use of it wherever necessary. In our dealings with the English people, in our dealings with our own people, when we can only correspond with them through that language, and for the purpose of knowing how disgusted they (the English) have themselves become with their civilization, we may use or learn English, as the case may be. Those who have studied English will have to teach morality to their progeny through their mother tongue and to teach them another Indian language; but when they have grown up, they may learn English, the ultimate aim being that we should not need it. The object of making money thereby should be eschewed. Even in learning English to such a limited extent we shall have to consider what we should learn through it and what we should not. It will be necessary to know what sciences we should learn. A little thought should show you that immediately we cease to care for English degrees, the rulers will prick up their ears.

READER. Then what education shall we give?

EDITOR. This has been somewhat considered above, but we will consider it a little more. I think that we have to improve all our languages. What subjects we should learn through them need not be elaborated here. Those English books which are

valuable, we should translate into the various Indian languages. We should abandon the pretension of learning many sciences. Religious, that is ethical, education will occupy the first place. Every cultured Indian will know in addition to his own provincial language, if a Hindu, Sanskrit, if a Mahomedan, Arabic, if a Parsee, Persian, and all, Hindi. Some Hindus should know Arabic and Persian, some Mahomedans and Parsees, Sanskrit. Several Northerners and Westerners should learn Tamil. A universal language for India should be Hindi, with the option of writing it in Persian or Nagari characters. In order that the Hindus and the Mahomedans may have closer relations, it is necessary to know both the characters. And, if we can do this, we can drive the English language out of the field in a short time. All this is necessary for us, slaves. Through our slavery the nation has been enslaved, and it will be free with our freedom.

READER The question of religious education is very difficult.

EDITOR Yet we cannot do without it. India will never be godless. Rank atheism cannot flourish in this land. The task is indeed difficult. My head begins to turn as I think of religious education. Our religious teachers are hypocritical and selfish, they will have to be approached. The Mullas, the Dasturs and the Brahmins hold the key in their hands, but if they will not have the good sense, the energy that we have derived from English education will have to



be devoted to religious education. This is not very difficult. Only the fringe of the ocean has been polluted and it is those who are within the fringe who alone need cleansing. We who come under this category can even cleanse ourselves because my remarks do not apply to the millions. In order to restore India to its pristine condition, we have to return to it. In our own civilization there will naturally be progress, retrogression, reforms, and reactions, but one effort is required, and that is to drive out Western civilization. All else will follow.

## CHAPTER XIX MACHINERY

READER: When you speak of driving out Western civilization, I suppose you will also say that we want no machinery.

EDITOR By raising this question, you have opened the wound I have received. When I read Mr. Dutt's *Economic History of India*, I wept, and as I think of it again my heart sickens. It is machinery that has impoverished India. It is difficult to measure the harm that Manchester has done to us. It is due to Manchester that Indian handicraft has all but disappeared.

But I make a mistake. How can Manchester be blamed? We wore Manchester cloth and this is why Manchester wove it. I was delighted when I read about the bravery of Bengal. There were no cloth-

mills in that presidency They were, therefore, able to restore the original hand-weaving occupation It is true Bengal encourages the mill-industry of Bombay. If Bengal had proclaimed a boycott of *all* machine-made goods, it would have been much better

Machinery has begun to desolate Europe Ruination is now knocking at the English gates Machinery is the chief symbol of modern civilization, it represents a great sin

The workers in the mills of Bombay have become slaves The condition of the women working in the mills is shocking When there were no mills, these women were not starving If the machinery craze grows in our country, it will become an unhappy land It may be considered a heresy, but I am bound to say that it were better for us to send money to Manchester and to use flimsy Manchester cloth than to multiply mills in India By using Manchester cloth we only waste our money, but by reproducing Manchester in India, we shall keep our money at the price of our blood, because our very moral being will be sapped, and I call in support of my statement the very mill-hands as witnesses And those who have amassed wealth out of factories are not likely to be better than other rich men It would be folly to assume that an Indian Rockefeller would be better than the American Rockefeller Impoverished India can become free, but it will be hard for any India made rich through immorality to regain its freedom I fear we shall have to admit that moneyed men support

British rule; their interest is bound up with its stability. Money renders a man helpless. The other thing which is equally harmful is sexual vice. Both are poison. A snake-bite is a lesser poison than these two, because the former merely destroys the body but the latter destroys body, mind and soul. We need not, therefore, be pleased with the prospect of the growth of the mill-industry.

READER. Are the mills, then, to be closed down?

EDITOR. That is difficult. It is no easy task to do away with a thing that is established. We, therefore, say that the non-beginning of a thing is supreme wisdom. We cannot condemn mill-owners, we can but pity them. It would be too much to expect them to give up their mills, but we may implore them not to increase them. If they would be good they would gradually contract their business. They can establish in thousands of households the ancient and sacred handlooms and they can buy out the cloth that may be thus woven. Whether the mill-owners do this or not, people can cease to use machine-made goods.

READER. You have so far spoken about machine-made cloth, but there are innumerable machine-made things. We have either to import them or to introduce machinery into our country.

EDITOR. Indeed, our gods even are made in Germany. What need, then, to speak of matches, pins and glassware? My answer can be only one. What did India do before these articles were introduced? Precisely the same should be done today.

As long as we cannot make pins without machinery so long will we do without them. The tinsel splendour of glassware we will have nothing to do with, and we will make wicks, as of old, with home-grown cotton and use handmade earthen saucers for lamps. So doing, we shall save our eyes and money and support Swadeshi and so shall we attain Home Rule.

It is not to be conceived that all men will do all these things at one time or that some men will give up all machine-made things at once. But, if the thought is sound, we shall always find out what we can give up and gradually cease to use it. What a few may do, others will copy, and the movement will grow like the cocoanut of the mathematical problem. What the leaders do, the populace will gladly do in turn. The matter is neither complicated nor difficult. You and I need not wait until we can carry others with us. Those will be the losers who will not do it, and those who will not do it, although they appreciate the truth, will deserve to be called cowards.

READER What, then, of the tram-cars and electricity?

EDITOR This question is now too late. It signifies nothing. If we are to do without the railways we shall have to do without the tram-cars. Machinery is like a snake-hole which may contain from one to a hundred snakes. Where there is machinery there are large cities, and where there are large cities, there are tram-cars and railways, and there only does one see electric light. English villages do not boast of any

of these things. Honest physicians will tell you that where means of artificial locomotion have increased, the health of the people has suffered. I remember that when in a European town there was a scarcity of money, the receipts of the tramway company, of the lawyers and of the doctors went down and people were less unhealthy. I cannot recall a single good point in connection with machinery. Books can be written to demonstrate its evils.

READER Is it a good point or a bad one that all you are saying will be printed through machinery?

EDITOR. This is one of those instances which demonstrate that sometimes poison is used to kill poison. This, then, will not be a good point regarding machinery. As it expires, the machinery, as it were, says to us "Beware and avoid me. You will derive no benefits from me and the benefit that may accrue from printing will avail only those who are infected with the machinery-craze."

Do not, therefore, forget the main thing. It is necessary to realize that machinery is bad. We shall then be able gradually to do away with it. Nature has not provided any way whereby we may reach a desired goal all of a sudden. If, instead of welcoming machinery as a boon, we should look upon it as an evil, it would ultimately go

## CHAPTER XX

### CONCLUSION

READER From your views I gather that you would form a third party. You are neither an extremist nor a moderate

EDITOR That is a mistake I do not think of a third party at all We do not all think alike We cannot say that all the moderates hold identical views And how can those who want only to serve have a party? I would serve both the moderates and the extremists Where I differ from them, I would respectfully place my position before them and continue my service

READER What, then, would you say to both the parties?

EDITOR I would say to the extremists "I know that you want Home Rule for India; it is not to be had for your asking Everyone will have to take it for himself What others get for me is not Home Rule but foreign rule, therefore, it would not be proper for you to say that you have obtained Home Rule if you have merely expelled the English. I have already described the true nature of Home Rule. This you would never obtain by force of arms Brute-force is not natural to Indian soil You will have, therefore, to rely wholly on soul-force. You must not consider that violence is necessary at any stage for reaching our goal "

I would say to the moderates: "Mere petitioning is derogatory; we thereby confess inferiority. To say that British rule is indispensable, is almost a denial of the Godhead. We cannot say that anybody or anything is indispensable except God. Moreover, common sense should tell us that to state that, for the time being, the presence of the English in India is a necessity, is to make them conceited

"If the English vacated India, bag and baggage, it must not be supposed that she would be widowed. It is possible that those who are forced to observe peace under their pressure would fight after their withdrawal. There can be no advantage in suppressing an eruption, it must have its vent. If, therefore, before we can remain at peace, we must fight amongst ourselves, it is better that we do so. There is no occasion for a third party to protect the weak. It is this so-called protection which has unnerved us. Such protection can only make the weak weaker. Unless we realize this, we cannot have Home Rule. I would paraphrase the thought of an English divine and say that anarchy under Home Rule were better than orderly foreign rule. Only, the meaning that the learned divine attached to Home Rule is different from Indian Home Rule according to my conception. We have to learn, and to teach others, that we do not want the tyranny of either English rule or Indian rule."

If this idea were carried out, both the extremists and the moderates could join hands. There is no occasion to fear or distrust one another.

READER What, then, would you say to the English?

EDITOR To them I would respectfully say "I admit you are my rulers. It is not necessary to debate the question whether, you hold India by the sword or by my consent. I have no objection to your remaining in my country, but although you are the rulers, you will have to remain as servants of the people. It is not we who have to do as you wish, but it is you who have to do as we wish. You may keep the riches that you have drained away from this land, but you may not drain riches henceforth. Your function will be, if you so wish, to police India; you must abandon the idea of deriving any commercial benefit from us. We hold the civilization that you support to be the reverse of civilization. We consider our civilization to be far superior to yours. If you realize this truth, it will be to your advantage and, if you do not, according to your own proverb, you should only live in our country in the same manner as we do. You must not do anything that is contrary to our religions. It is your duty as rulers that for the sake of the Hindus you should eschew beef, and for the sake of Mahomedans you should avoid bacon and ham. We have hitherto said nothing because we have been cowed down, but you need not consider that you have not hurt our feelings by your conduct. We are not expressing our sentiments either through base selfishness or fear, but because it is our duty now to speak out boldly. We consider your schools and law courts to be useless. We want



our own ancient schools and courts to be restored. The common language of India is not English but Hindi. You should, therefore, learn it. We can hold communication with you only in our national language.

"We cannot tolerate the idea of your spending money on railways and the military. We see no occasion for either. You may fear Russia; we do not. When she comes we shall look after her. If you are with us, we may then receive her jointly. We do not need any European cloth. We shall manage with articles produced and manufactured at home. You may not keep one eye on Manchester and the other on India. We can work together only if our interests are identical.

"This has not been said to you in arrogance. You have great military resources. Your naval power is matchless. If we wanted to fight with you on your own ground, we should be unable to do so, but if the above submissions be not acceptable to you, we cease to play the part of the ruled. You may, if you like, cut us to pieces. You may shatter us at the cannon's mouth. If you act contrary to our will, we shall not help you; and without our help, we know that you cannot move one step forward.

"It is likely that you will laugh at all this in the intoxication of your power. We may not be able to disillusion you at once; but if there be any manliness in us, you will see shortly that your intoxication is suicidal and that your laugh at our expense is an

aberration of intellect. We believe that at heart you belong to a religious nation. We are living in a land which is the source of religions. How we came together need not be considered, but we can make mutual good use of our relations.

"You, English, who have come to India are not good specimens of the English nation, nor can we, almost half-Anglicized Indians, be considered good specimens of the real Indian nation. If the English nation were to know all you have done, it would oppose many of your actions. The mass of the Indians have had few dealings with you. If you will abandon your so-called civilization and search into your own scriptures, you will find that our demands are just. Only on condition of our demands being fully satisfied may you remain in India; and if you remain under those conditions, we shall learn several things from you and you will learn many from us. So doing we shall benefit each other and the world. But that will happen only when the root of our relationship is sunk in a religious soil."

READER. What will you say to the nation?

EDITOR. Who is the nation?

READER. For our purposes it is the nation that you and I have been thinking of, that is those of us who are affected by European civilization, and who are eager to have Home Rule.

EDITOR. To these I would say, "It is only those Indians who are imbued with real love who will be able to speak to the English in the above strain

without being frightened, and only those can be said to be so imbued who conscientiously believe that Indian civilization is the best and that the European is a nine days' wonder. Such ephemeral civilizations have often come and gone and will continue to do so. Those only can be considered to be so imbued who, having experienced the force of the soul within themselves, will not cower before brute-force, and will not, on any account, desire to use brute-force. Those only can be considered to have been so imbued who are intensely dissatisfied with the present pitiable condition, having already drunk the cup of poison

"If there be only one such Indian, he will speak as above to the English and the English will have to listen to him

"These are not demands, but they show our mental state. We shall get nothing by asking, we shall have to take what we want, and we need the requisite strength for the effort and that strength will be available to him only who will act thus

1 He will only on rare occasions make use of the English language,

2 If a lawyer, he will give up his profession, and take up a hand-loom;

3. If a lawyer, he will devote his knowledge to enlightening both his people and the English;

4 If a lawyer, he will not meddle with the quarrels between parties but will give up the courts, and from his experience induce the people to do likewise;

5. If a lawyer, he will refuse to be a judge, as he will give up his profession,

6 If a doctor, he will give up medicine, and understand that rather than mending [bodies, he should mend souls,

7 If a doctor, he will understand that no matter to what religion he belongs, it is better that bodies remain diseased rather than that they are cured through the instrumentality of the diabolical vivisection that is practised in European schools of medicine;

8 Although a doctor, he will take up a hand-loom, and if any patients come to him, will tell them the cause of their diseases, and will advise them to remove the cause rather than pamper them by giving useless drugs, he will understand that if by not taking drugs, perchance the patient dies, the world will not come to grief and that he will have been really merciful to him,

9 Although a wealthy man, yet regardless of his wealth, he will speak out his mind and fear no one,

10 If a wealthy man, he will devote his money to establishing hand-loom, and encourage others to use hand-made goods by wearing them himself,

11 Like every other Indian, he will know that this is a time for repentance, expiation and mourning,

12 Like every other Indian, he will know that to blame the English is useless, that they came because of us, and remain also for the same reason,

and that they will either go or change their nature only when we reform ourselves;

13. Like others, he will understand that at a time of mourning, there can be no indulgence, and that, whilst we are in a fallen state, to be in gaol or in banishment is much the best;

14. Like others, he will know that it is superstition to imagine it necessary that we should guard against being imprisoned in order that we may deal with the people;

15. Like others, he will know that action is much better than speech; that it is our duty to say exactly what we think and face the consequences and that it will be only then that we shall be able to impress anybody with our speech;

16. Like others, he will understand that we shall become free only through suffering;

17. Like others, he will understand that deportation for life to the Andamans is not enough expiation for the sin of encouraging European civilization;

18. Like others, he will know that no nation has risen without suffering; that, even in physical warfare, the true test is suffering and not the killing of others, much more so in the warfare of passive resistance;

19. Like others, he will know that it is an idle excuse to say that we shall do a thing when the others also do it. that we should do what we know to be right, and that others will do it when they see the way; that when I fancy a particular delicacy, I do not wait till others taste it . that to make a national

effort and to suffer are in the nature of delicacies; and that to suffer under pressure is no suffering."

READER . This is a large order. When will all carry it out?

EDITOR You make a mistake You and I have nothing to do with the others Let each do his duty If I do my duty, that is, serve myself, I shall be able to serve others Before I leave you, I will take the liberty of repeating :

1 Real home-rule is self-rule or self-control

2 The way to it is passive resistance : that is soul-force or love-force

3. In order to exert this force, Swadeshi in every sense is necessary

4 What we want to do should be done, not because we object to the English or because we want to retaliate but because it is our duty to do so. Thus, supposing that the English remove the salt-tax, restore our money, give the highest posts to Indians, withdraw the English troops, we shall certainly not use their machine-made goods, nor use the English language, nor many of their industries It is worth noting that these things are, in their nature, harmful; hence we do not want them I bear no enmity towards the English but I do towards their civilization

In my opinion, we have used the term "Swaraj" without understanding its real significance I have endeavoured to explain it as I understand it, and my conscience testifies that my life henceforth is dedicated to its attainment.

APPENDICES

SOME AUTHORITIES AND TESTIMONIES  
BY EMINENT MEN

**I. Some Authorities**

*The following books are recommended for perusal to follow up the study of the foregoing:*

The Kingdom of God Is within You — *Tolstoy*

What Is Art? — *Tolstoy*

The Slavery of Our Times — *Tolstoy*

The First Step — *Tolstoy*

How Shall We Escape? — *Tolstoy*

Letter to a Hindoo — *Tolstoy*

The White Slaves of England — *Sherard*

Civilization, Its Cause and Cure — *Carpenter*

The Fallacy of Speed — *Taylor*

A New Crusade — *Blount*

On the Duty of Civil Disobedience — *Thoreau*

Life without Principle — *Thoreau*

Unto This Last — *Ruskin*

A Joy for Ever — *Ruskin*

Duties of Man — *Mazzini*

Defence and Death of Socrates — From *Plato*

Paradoxes of Civilization — *Max Nordau*

Poverty and Un-British Rule in India — *Naoroji*

Economic History of India — *Dutt*

Village Communities — *Maine*

**II. Testimonies by Eminent Men**

*The following extracts from Mr Alfred Webb's valuable*

*collection show that the ancient Indian civilization has little to learn from the modern*

J SEYMOUR KEAY, M P

*Banker in India and India Agent*

*(Writing in 1883)*

“It cannot be too well understood that our position in India has never been in any degree that of civilians bringing civilization to savage races. When we landed in India we found there a hoary civilization, which, during the progress of thousands of years, had fitted itself into the character and adjusted itself to the wants of highly intellectual races. The civilization was not perfunctory, but universal and all-pervading—furnishing the country not only with political systems, but with social and domestic institutions of the most ramified description. The beneficent nature of these institutions as a whole may be judged from their effects on the character of the Hindu race. Perhaps there are no other people in the world who show so much in their characters the advantageous effects of their own civilization. They are shrewd in business, acute in reasoning, thrifty, religious, sober, charitable, obedient to parents, reverential to old age, amiable, law-abiding, compassionate towards the helpless and patient under suffering.”

VICTOR COUSIN (1792-1867)

*Founder of Systematic Eclecticism in Philosophy*

“On the other hand when we read with attention the poetical and philosophical movements of the East, above all, those of India, which are beginning to



spread in Europe, we discover there so many truths, and truths, so profound, and which make such a contrast with the meanness of the results at which the European genius has some times stopped, that we are constrained to bend the knee before that of the East, and do see in this cradle of the human race the native land of the highest philosophy."

FRIEDRICH MAX MULLER

"If I were to ask myself from what literature we here in Europe, we who have been nurtured almost exclusively on the thoughts of Greeks and Romans, and of one Semitic race, the Jewish, may draw that corrective which is most wanted in order to make our inner life more perfect, more comprehensive, more universal, in fact more truly human, a life, not for this life only, but a transfigured and eternal life—again I should point to India "

FREDERICK VON SCHLEGEL

"It cannot be denied that the early Indians possessed a knowledge of the true God; all their writings are replete with sentiments and expressions, noble, clear and severely grand, as deeply conceived and reverently expressed as in any human language in which men have spoken of their God . . . Among nations possessing indigenous philosophy and metaphysics together with an innate relish for these pursuits, such as at present characterizes Germany, and in olden times was the proud distinction of Greece, Hindustan holds the first rank in point of time."

## ABBE J A DUBOIS

*Missionary in Mysore Extracts from a letter dated  
Seeringapatan, 15th December, 1820*

“The authority of married women within their houses is chiefly exerted in preserving good order and peace among the persons who compose their families; and a great many among them discharge this important duty with a prudence and a discretion which have scarcely a parallel in Europe I have known families composed of between thirty and forty persons, or more, consisting of grown up sons and daughters, all married and all having children, living together under the superintendence of an old matron—their mother or mother-in-law The latter, by good management, and by accommodating herself to the temper of the daughters-in-law, by using, according to circumstances firmness or forbearance, succeeded in preserving peace and harmony during many years amongst so many females, who had all jarring tempers I ask you whether it would be possible to attain the same end, in the same circumstances, in our countries, where it is scarcely possible to make two women living under the same roof to agree together

“In fact, there is perhaps no kind of honest employment in a civilized country in which the Hindu females have not a due share Besides the management of the household, and the care of the family which (as already noticed) is under their control the wives and daughters of husbandmen attend and assist their husbands and fathers in the labours of

agriculture. Those of tradesmen assist theirs in carrying on their trade. Merchants are attended and assisted by theirs in their shops. Many females are shopkeepers on their own account; and *without a knowledge of the alphabet* or of the decimal scale, they keep by other means their accounts in excellent order, and are considered as still shrewder than the males themselves in their commercial dealings."

J YOUNG

*Secretary, Savon Mechanics Institutes*

*(Within recent years)*

"Those races (the Indian viewed from a moral aspect) are perhaps the most remarkable people in the world. They breathe an atmosphere of moral purity, which cannot but excite admiration, and this is especially the case with the poorer classes, who, notwithstanding the privations of their humble lot, appear to be happy and contented True children of nature, they live on from day to day, taking no thought for the morrow and thankful for the simple fare which Providence has provided for them It is curious to witness the spectacle of coolies of both sexes returning home at nightfall after a hard day's work often lasting from sunrise to sunset In spite of fatigue from the effects of the unremitting toil, they are, for the most part gay and animated, conversing cheerfully together and occasionally breaking into snatches of light-hearted song. Yet what awaits them on their return to the hovels which they call home? A dish of rice for food, and the floor for a bed.

Domestic felicity appears to be the rule among the Natives, and this is the more strange when the customs of marriage are taken into account, parents arranging all such matters. Many Indian households afford examples of the married state in its highest degree of perfection. This may be due to the teachings of the Shastras, and to the strict injunctions which they inculcate with regard to marital obligation; but it is no exaggeration to say that husbands are generally devotedly attached to their wives, and in many instances the latter have the most exalted conception of their duties towards their husbands ”

COLONEL THOMAS MUNRO

*(Thirty-two years' service in India)*

“If a good system of agriculture, unrivalled manufacturing skill, a capacity to produce whatever can contribute to convenience or luxury, schools established in every village, for teaching reading, writing and arithmetic, the general practice of hospitality and charity among each other, and, above all, a treatment of the female sex, full of confidence, respect and delicacy, are among the signs which denote a civilized people, then the Hindus are not inferior to the nations of Europe, and if civilization is to become an article of trade between the two countries, I am convinced that this country (England) will gain by the import cargo ”

SIR WILLIAM WEDDERBURN, BART

“The Indian village has thus for centuries re-

mained a bulwark against political disorder, and the home of the simple domestic and social virtues. No wonder, therefore, that philosophers and historians have always dwelt lovingly on this ancient institution which is the natural social unit and the best type of rural life: self-contained, industrious, peace-loving, conservative in the best sense of the word. . . . I think you will agree with me that there is much that is both picturesque and attractive in this glimpse of social and domestic life in an Indian village. It is a harmless and happy form of human existence. Moreover, it is not without good practical outcome."

FROM YERAVDA MANDIR

## TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

(FIRST EDITION)

My grateful thanks are due to my friend and former pupil, Shri Ramanlal Gokuldas Saraiya, for valuable assistance in the rendering of the first three letters, and to Shri Duncan Greenlees for reading the proofs.

V. G. D.

(THIRD REVISED EDITION)

This is a reprint of the second edition except for some verbal alterations suggested by my friend Shri Verrier Elwin who was good enough to go through the translation at my request. For the rest, war conditions are responsible for the increase in the price of this booklet, but I hope that when the next impression is out, it will be possible to return to its former popular price.

Vasantapanchami

V. G. D.

Samvat 2001

## PREFACE

During my incarceration in 1930 in the Yeravda Central Prison, I wrote weekly letters to the Satyagraha Ashram, containing a cursory examination of the principal Ashram observances. As the Ashram influence had already travelled beyond its geographical limits, copies of the letters were multiplied for distribution. They were written in Gujarati. There was a demand for translation into Hindi and other Indian languages, and also into English. Shri Valji Desai gave a fairly full translation in English. But seeing me in possession of comparative leisure during the recurrent incarceration, he has sent me his translation for revision. I have gone through it carefully, and touched up several passages to bring out my meaning more to my liking. I need hardly add, that if I was writing anew for the English reader, perhaps I should write a wholly new thing. But that would be going beyond my commission. And perhaps it is as well, that even the English reader has the trend of my thought as expressed to the inmates of the Ashram, and in the year 1930. I have therefore taken the least liberty with the original argument.

Yeravda Central Prison

M K GANDHI

6th March, 1932



एतद्ब्रतं नानृतं वदेन्न मांसमश्नीयान्न स्त्रियमुपेयात् ।

सत्याषाढश्रौतसूत्रे प्रश्न २, पटल ६, सूत्र १६ ।

सत्यमया उ देवाः ॥ कौ. ब्रा. २-८ ॥

\* \* \* \*

Of all duties, the love of truth, with faith and constancy in it, ranks first and highest. Truth is God. To love God and to love truth are one and the same.

SILVIO PELLICO

\* \* \* \*

न हिंस्यात्सर्वा भूतानि । श्रुतिः ।

\* \* \* \*

एकेन्द्रियासंयमोऽपि निवार्यते इत्याह—

इन्द्रियाणां तु सर्वेषां यद्येकं क्षरतीन्द्रियम् ।

तेनास्य क्षरति प्रज्ञा दृतेः पादादिवोदकम् ॥

इन्द्रियाणां त्विति । सर्वेषामिन्द्रियाणां मध्ये यद्येकमपीन्द्रियं विषयप्रवणं भवति ततोऽस्य विषयपरस्य इन्द्रियान्तरैरपि तत्त्वज्ञानं क्षरति न व्यवतिष्ठते । चर्मनिर्मितोदकपात्रादिवैकेनापि छिद्रेण सर्वस्थानस्थमेवोदकं न व्यवतिष्ठते ।

मनुस्मृतौ कुल्लूकवृत्तिसमेतायाम् । २-९९ ।

ब्रह्मचर्यं सकलेन्द्रियसंयमः ।

विज्ञानेश्वरो मिताक्षरायाम् । याज्ञ० ३-३१२ ।

औषधवदशनमाचरेत् । आरुणेयी उपनिषद् ।

औषधवत्प्रीतिं विना शरीरस्थित्यर्थमशनं भोजनमाचरेत् ।

नारायणो दीपिकायाम् ।

\* \* \* \*

यज्ञाय सृष्टानि धनानि घात्रा ।

# I

## TRUTH

I deal with Truth first of all, as the Satyagraha Ashram owes its very existence to the pursuit and the attempted practice of Truth

The word *Satya* (Truth) is derived from *Sat*, which means 'being'. Nothing is or exists in reality except Truth. That is why *Sat* or Truth is perhaps the most important name of God. In fact it is more correct to say that Truth is God, than to say that God is Truth. But as we cannot do without a ruler or a general, such names of God as 'King of Kings' or 'The Almighty' are and will remain generally current. On deeper thinking, however, it will be realized, that *Sat* or *Satya* is the only correct and fully significant name for God.

And where there is Truth, there also is knowledge which is true. Where there is no Truth, there can be no true knowledge. That is why the word *Chit* or knowledge is associated with the name of God. And where there is true knowledge, there is always bliss (*Ananda*). There sorrow has no place. And even as Truth is eternal, so is the bliss derived from it. Hence we know God as *Sat-chit-ananda*, One who combines in Himself Truth, Knowledge and Bliss.

Devotion to this Truth is the sole justification for our existence. All our activities should be centred in Truth. Truth should be the very breath of our life.

When once this stage in the pilgrim's progress is reached, all other rules of correct living will come without effort, and obedience to them will be instinctive. But without Truth it is impossible to observe any principles or rules in life.

Generally speaking, observation of the law of Truth is understood merely to mean that we must speak the truth. But we in the Ashram should understand the word *Satya* or Truth in a much wider sense. There should be Truth in thought, Truth in speech, and Truth in action. To the man who has realized this Truth in its fulness, nothing else remains to be known, because all knowledge is necessarily included in it. What is not included in it is not Truth, and so not true knowledge; and there can be no inward peace without true knowledge. If we once learn how to apply this never-failing test of Truth, we will at once be able to find out what is worth doing, what is worth seeing, what is worth reading.

But how is one to realize this Truth, which may be likened to the philosopher's stone or the cow of plenty? By single-minded devotion (*abhyasa*) and indifference to all other interests in life (*vairagya*)—replies the Bhagavadgita. In spite, however, of such devotion, what may appear as truth to one person will often appear as untruth to another person. But that need not worry the seeker. Where there is honest effort, it will be realized that what appear to be different truths are like the countless and apparently different leaves of the same tree. Does not God Himself

appear to different individuals in different aspects? Yet we know that He is one. But Truth is the right designation of God. Hence there is nothing wrong in every man following Truth according to his lights. Indeed it is his duty to do so. Then if there is a mistake on the part of any one so following Truth, it will be automatically set right. For the quest of Truth involves *tapas*—self-suffering, sometimes even unto death. There can be no place in it for even a trace of self-interest. In such selfless search for Truth nobody can lose his bearings for long. Directly he takes to the wrong path he stumbles, and is thus redirected to the right path. Therefore the pursuit of Truth is true *bhakti* (devotion). It is the path that leads to God. There is no place in it for cowardice, no place for defeat. It is the talisman by which death itself becomes the portal to life eternal.

In this connection it would be well to ponder over the lives and examples of Harishchandra, Prahlad, Ramachandra, Imam Hasan and Imam Husain, the Christian saints, etc. How beautiful it would be, if all of us, young and old, men and women, devoted ourselves wholly to Truth in all that we might do in our waking hours, whether working, eating, drinking or playing, till dissolution of the body makes us one with Truth? God as Truth has been for me a treasure beyond price, may He be so to every one of us.

## II

### AHIMSA or LOVE

We saw last week how the path of Truth is as narrow as it is straight. Even so is that of *ahimsa*. It is like balancing oneself on the edge of a sword. By concentration an acrobat can walk on a rope. But the concentration required to tread the path of Truth and *ahimsa* is far greater. The slightest inattention brings one tumbling to the ground. One can realize Truth and *ahimsa* only by ceaseless striving.

But it is impossible for us to realize perfect Truth so long as we are imprisoned in this mortal frame. We can only visualize it in our imagination. We cannot, through the instrumentality of this ephemeral body, see face to face Truth which is eternal. That is why in the last resort we must depend on faith.

It appears that the impossibility of full realization of Truth in this mortal body led some ancient seeker after Truth to the appreciation of *ahimsa*. The question which confronted him was: "Shall I bear with those who create difficulties for me, or shall I destroy them?" The seeker realized that he who went on destroying others did not make headway but simply stayed where he was, while the man who suffered those who created difficulties marched ahead, and at times even took the others with him. The first act of destruction taught him that the Truth which was the object of his quest was not outside himself.

but within. Hence the more he took to violence, the more he receded from Truth. For in fighting the imagined enemy without, he neglected the enemy within.

We punish thieves, because we think they harass us. They may leave us alone, but they will only transfer their attentions to another victim. This other victim however is also a human being, ourselves in a different form, and so we are caught in a vicious circle. The trouble from thieves continues to increase, as they think it is their business to steal. In the end we see that it is better to endure the thieves than to punish them. The forbearance may even bring them to their senses. By enduring them we realize that thieves are not different from ourselves, they are our brethren, our friends, and may not be punished. But whilst we may bear with the thieves, we may not endure the infliction. That would only induce cowardice. So we realize a further duty. Since we regard the thieves as our kith and kin, they must be made to realize the kinship. And so we must take pains to devise ways and means of winning them over. This is the path of *ahimsa*. It may entail continuous suffering and the cultivating of endless patience. Given these two conditions, the thief is bound in the end to turn away from his evil ways. Thus step by step we learn how to make friends with all the world, we realize the greatness of God—of Truth. Our peace of mind increases in spite of suffering, we become braver and more enterprising, we understand more clearly the difference between what is everlasting and what is not;

we learn how to distinguish between what is our duty and what is not. Our pride melts away, and we become humble. Our worldly attachments diminish, and the evil within us diminishes from day to day.

*Ahimsa* is not the crude thing it has been made to appear. Not to hurt any living thing is no doubt a part of *ahimsa*. But it is its least expression. The principle of *ahimsa* is hurt by every evil thought, by undue haste, by lying, by hatred, by wishing ill to anybody. It is also violated by our holding on to what the world needs. But the world needs even what we eat day by day. In the place where we stand there are millions of micro-organisms to whom the place belongs, and who are hurt by our presence there. What should we do then? Should we commit suicide? Even that is no solution, if we believe, as we do, that so long as the spirit is attached to the flesh, on every destruction of the body it weaves for itself another. The body will cease to be only when we give up all attachment to it. This freedom from all attachment is the realization of God as Truth. Such realization cannot be attained in a hurry. The body does not belong to us. While it lasts, we must use it as a trust handed over to our charge. Treating in this way the things of the flesh, we may one day expect to become free from the burden of the body. Realizing the limitations of the flesh, we must strive day by day towards the ideal with what strength we have in us.

It is perhaps clear from the foregoing, that without

*ahimsa* it is not possible to seek and find Truth. *Ahimsa* and Truth are so intertwined that it is practically impossible to disentangle and separate them. They are like the two sides of a coin, or rather of a smooth unstamped metallic disc. Who can say, which is the obverse, and which is the reverse? Nevertheless *ahimsa* is the means, Truth is the end. Means to be means must always be within our reach, and so *ahimsa* is our supreme duty. If we take care of the means, we are bound to reach the end sooner or later. When once we have grasped this point, final victory is beyond question. Whatever difficulties we encounter, whatever apparent reverses we sustain, we may not give up the quest for Truth which alone is, being God Himself.

### III

#### BRAHMACHARYA or CHASTITY

The third among our observances is *brahmacharya*. As a matter of fact all observances are deducible from Truth, and are meant to subserve it. The man, who is wedded to Truth and worships Truth alone, proves unfaithful to her, if he applies his talents to anything else. How then can he minister to the senses? A man, whose activities are wholly consecrated to the realization of Truth, which requires utter selflessness, can have no time for the selfish purpose of begetting children and running a household. Realization of Truth through self-grati-



fication should, after what has been said before, appear a contradiction in terms.

If we look at it from the standpoint of *ahimsa* (non-violence), we find that the fulfilment of *ahimsa* is impossible without utter selflessness. *Ahimsa* means Universal Love. If a man gives his love to one woman, or a woman to one man, what is there left for all the world besides? It simply means, "We two first, and the devil take all the rest of them" As a faithful wife must be prepared to sacrifice her all for the sake of her husband, and a faithful husband for the sake of his wife, it is clear that such persons cannot rise to the height of Universal Love, or look upon all mankind as kith and kin. For they have created a boundary wall round their love. The larger their family, the farther are they from Universal Love. Hence one who would obey the law of *ahimsa* cannot marry, not to speak of gratification outside the marital bond.

Then what about people who are already married? Will they never be able to realize Truth? Can they never offer up their all at the altar of humanity? There is a way out for them. They can behave as if they were not married. Those who have enjoyed this happy condition will be able to bear me out. Many have to my knowledge successfully tried the experiment. If the married couple can think of each other as brother and sister, they are freed for universal service. The very thought that all the women in the world are his sisters, mothers or daughters will at once ennoble a man and snap his chains. The

husband and wife do not lose anything here, but only add to their resources and even to their family. Their love becomes free from the impurity of lust and so grows stronger. With the disappearance of this impurity, they can serve each other better, and the occasions for quarrelling become fewer. There are more occasions for quarrelling where the love is selfish and bounded.

If the foregoing argument is appreciated, a consideration of the physical benefits of chastity becomes a matter of secondary importance. How foolish it is intentionally to dissipate vital energy in sensual enjoyment! It is a grave misuse to fritter away for physical gratification that which is given to man and woman for the full development of their bodily and mental powers. Such misuse is the root cause of many a disease.

*Brahmacharya*, like all other observances, must be observed in thought, word and deed. We are told in the Gita, and experience will corroborate the statement, that the foolish man, who appears to control his body, but is nursing evil thoughts in his mind, makes a vain effort. It may be harmful to suppress the body, if the mind is at the same time allowed to go astray. Where the mind wanders, the body must follow sooner or later.

It is necessary here to appreciate a distinction. It is one thing to allow the mind to harbour impure thoughts, it is a different thing altogether if it strays among them in spite of ourselves. Victory will be

ours in the end, if we non-cooperate with the mind in its evil wanderings.

We experience every moment of our lives, that often while the body is subject to our control, the mind is not. This physical control should never be relaxed, and in addition we must put forth a constant endeavour to bring the mind under control. We can do nothing more, nothing less. If we give way to the mind, the body and the mind will pull different ways, and we shall be false to ourselves. Body and mind may be said to go together, so long as we continue to resist the approach of every evil thought.

The observance of *brahmacharya* has been believed to be very difficult, almost impossible. In trying to find a reason for this belief, we see that the term *brahmacharya* has been taken in a narrow sense. Mere control of animal passion has been thought to be tantamount to observing *brahmacharya*. I feel, that this conception is incomplete and wrong. *Brahmacharya* means control of all the organs of sense. He who attempts to control only one organ, and allows all the others free play, is bound to find his effort futile. To hear suggestive stories with the ears, to see suggestive sights with the eyes, to taste stimulating food with the tongue, to touch exciting things with the hands, and then at the same time to expect to control the only remaining organ is like putting one's hands in the fire, and expecting to escape being burnt. He therefore who is resolved to control the one must be likewise determined to control the rest. I have

always felt, that much harm has been done by the narrow definition of *brahmacharya*. If we practise simultaneous self-control in all directions, the attempt will be scientific and possible of success. Perhaps the palate is the chief sinner. That is why in the Ashram we have assigned to control of the palate a separate place among our observances.

Let us remember the root meaning of *brahmacharya*. *Charya* means course of conduct, *brahmacharya* conduct adapted to the search of *Brahma*, i.e. Truth. From this etymological meaning arises the special meaning, viz. control of all the senses. We must entirely forget the incomplete definition which restricts itself to the sexual aspect only.

#### IV

### CONTROL OF THE PALATE

Control of the palate is very closely connected with the observance of *brahmacharya*. I have found from experience that the observance of celibacy becomes comparatively easy, if one acquires mastery over the palate. This does not figure among the observances of time-honoured recognition. Could it be because even great sages found it difficult to achieve? In the Satyagraha Ashram we have elevated it to the rank of an independent observance, and must therefore consider it by itself.

Food has to be taken as we take medicine, that is, without thinking whether it is palatable or otherwise,

and only in quantities limited to the needs of the body. Just as medicine taken in too small a dose does not take effect or the full effect, and as too large a dose injures the system, so it is with food. It is therefore a breach of this observance to take anything just for its pleasant taste. It is equally a breach to take too much of what one finds to one's taste. From this it follows, that to put salt in one's food, in order to increase or modify its flavour or in order to cure its insipidity, is a breach of the observance. But the addition is not a breach, if it is considered necessary for health to have a certain proportion of salt with food. Of course it would be sheer hypocrisy to add salt or any other thing to our food, deluding ourselves that it is necessary for the system if as a matter of fact it is not.

Developing along these lines we find we have to give up many things that we have been enjoying, as they are not needed for nutrition. And one who thus gives up a multitude of eatables will acquire self-control in the natural course of things. This subject has received such scant attention, that choice of food with this observance in view is a very difficult matter.

Parents, out of false affection, give their children a variety of foods, ruin their constitutions, and create in them artificial tastes. When they grow up, they have diseased bodies and perverted tastes. The evil consequences of this early indulgence dog us at every step; we waste much money and fall an easy prey to the medicine man.

Most of us, instead of keeping the organs of sense under control, become their slaves. An experienced physician once observed that he had never seen a healthy man. The body is injured every time that one over-eats, and the injury can be partially repaired only by fasting.

No one need take fright at my observations, or give up the effort in despair. The taking of a vow does not mean, that we are able to observe it completely from the very beginning; it does mean constant and honest effort in thought, word and deed with a view to its fulfilment. We must not practise self-deception by resorting to some makebelieve. To degrade or cheapen an ideal for our convenience is to practise untruth and to lower ourselves. To understand an ideal and then to make a herculean effort to reach it, no matter how difficult it is,—this is *puru-shartha*, manly endeavour. One who at all times fulfils the key-observances in their perfection has nothing else left for him to do in this world; he is *bhagavan*, perfect man, he is a *yogi*. We humble seekers can but put forth a slow but steady effort, which is sure to win divine grace for us in God's good time, and all artificial tastes will then disappear with the realization of the Highest.

We must not be thinking of food all the twenty-four hours of the day. The only thing needful is perpetual vigilance, which will help us to find out very soon when we eat for self-indulgence, and when in order only to sustain the body. This being discovered, we

must resolutely set our faces against mere indulgence. A common kitchen where this principle is observed is very helpful, as it relieves us from the necessity of thinking out the *menu* for each day, and provides us with acceptable food of which we may take only a limited quantity with a contented and thankful mind. The authorities of a common kitchen lighten our burden and serve as watch-dogs of our observance. They will not pamper us, they will cook only such food as helps us to keep the body a fit instrument for service. In an ideal state the sun should be our only cook. But I know that we are far, far away from that happy state.

## V

## NON-STEALING

We now come to the observance of Non-stealing. Like the last two this is also implicit in Truth Love may be deduced from Truth, or may be paired with Truth Truth and Love are one and the same thing I am partial to Truth however In the final analysis there can only be a single reality The highest Truth stands by itself. Truth is the end, Love a means thereto We know what is Love or non-violence, although we find it difficult to follow the law of Love But as for Truth we know only a fraction of it. Perfect knowledge of Truth is difficult of attainment for man even, like the perfect practice of non-violence

It is impossible that a person should steal, and

simultaneously claim to know Truth or cherish Love. Yet every one of us is consciously or unconsciously more or less guilty of theft. We may steal not only what belongs to others, but also what belongs to ourselves, as is done, for instance, by a father who eats something secretly, keeping his children in the dark about it. The Ashram kitchen stores are our common property, but one who secretly removes a single crystal of sugar from it stamps himself a thief. It is theft to take anything belonging to another without his permission, even if it be with his knowledge. It is equally theft to take something in the belief that it is nobody's property. Things found on the roadside belong to the ruler or the local authority. Anything found near the Ashram must be handed over to the secretary, who in his turn will pass it on to the police if it is not Ashram property.

Thus far it is pretty smooth sailing. But the observance of Non-stealing goes very much farther. It is theft to take something from another even with his permission if we have no real need of it. We should not receive any single thing that we do not need. Theft of this description generally has food for its object. It is theft for me to take any fruit that I do not need, or to take it in a larger quantity than is necessary. We are not always aware of our real needs, and most of us improperly multiply our wants, and thus unconsciously make thieves of ourselves. If we devote some thought to the subject, we shall find that we can get rid of quite a number of our wants. One who



follows the observance of Non-stealing will bring about a progressive reduction of his own wants. Much of the distressing poverty in this world has arisen out of breaches of the principle of Non-stealing.

Theft, thus far considered, may be termed external or physical theft. There is besides another kind of theft subtler and far more degrading to the human spirit. It is theft mentally to desire acquisition of anything belonging to others, or to cast a greedy eye on it. One who takes no food, physically speaking, is generally said to be fasting, but he is guilty of theft as well as a breach of his fast, if he gives himself up to a mental contemplation of pleasure, when he sees others taking their meals. He is similarly guilty, if during his fast he is continually planning the varied *menu* he will have after breaking the fast.

One, who observes the principle of Non-stealing, will refuse to bother himself about things to be acquired in the future. This evil anxiety for the future will be found at the root of many a theft. Today we only desire possession of a thing; tomorrow we shall begin to adopt measures, straight if possible, crooked when thought necessary, to acquire its possession.

Ideas may be stolen no less than material things. One who egotistically claims to have originated some good idea, which, really speaking, did not originate with him, is guilty of a theft of ideas. Many learned men have committed such theft in the course of world history, and plagiarism is by no means uncommon even today. Supposing, for instance, that I

see a new type of spinning wheel in Andhra, and manufacture a similar wheel in the Ashram, passing it off as my own invention, I practise untruth, and am clearly guilty of stealing another's invention.

One who takes up the observance of Non-stealing has therefore to be humble, thoughtful, vigilant and in habits simple

## VI

### NON-POSSESSION or POVERTY

Non-possession is allied to Non-stealing. A thing not originally stolen must nevertheless be classified as stolen property, if we possess it without needing it. Possession implies provision for the future. A seeker after Truth, a follower of the law of Love cannot hold anything against tomorrow. God never stores for the morrow, He never creates more than what is strictly needed for the moment. If therefore we repose faith in His providence, we should rest assured, that He will give us every day our daily bread, meaning everything that we require. Saints and devotees, who have lived in such faith, have always derived a justification for it from their experience. Our ignorance or negligence of the Divine Law, which gives to man from day to day his daily bread and no more, has given rise to inequalities with all the miseries attendant upon them. The rich have a superfluous store of things which they do not need, and which are therefore neglected and wasted, while millions are starved

to death for want of sustenance. If each retained possession only of what he needed, no one would be in want, and all would live in contentment. As it is, the rich are discontented no less than the poor. The poor man would fain become a millionaire, and the millionaire a multi-millionaire. The rich should take the initiative in dispossession with a view to a universal diffusion of the spirit of contentment. If only they keep their own property within moderate limits, the starving will be easily fed, and will learn the lesson of contentment along with the rich. Perfect fulfilment of the ideal of Non-possession requires, that man should, like the birds, have no roof over his head, no clothing and no stock of food for the morrow. He will indeed need his daily bread, but it will be God's business, and not his, to provide it. Only the fewest possible, if any at all, can reach this ideal. We ordinary seekers may not be repelled by the seeming impossibility. But we must keep the ideal constantly in view, and in the light thereof, critically examine our possessions, and try to reduce them. Civilization, in the real sense of the term, consists not in the multiplication, but in the deliberate and voluntary reduction of wants. This alone promotes real happiness and contentment, and increases the capacity for service. Judging by this criterion, we find, that in the Ashram we possess many things, the necessity for which cannot be proved, and we thus tempt our neighbours to thieve.

From the standpoint of pure Truth, the body too

is a possession. It has been truly said, that desire for enjoyment creates bodies for the soul. When this desire vanishes, there remains no further need for the body, and man is free from the vicious cycle of births and deaths. The soul is omnipresent, why should she care to be confined within the cage-like body, or do evil and even kill for the sake of that cage? We thus arrive at the ideal of total renunciation, and learn to use the body for the purposes of service so long as it exists, so much so that service, and not bread, becomes with us the staff of life. We eat and drink, sleep and wake, for service alone. Such an attitude of mind brings us real happiness, and the beatific vision in the fulness of time. Let us all examine ourselves from this standpoint.

We should remember, that Non-possession is a principle applicable to thoughts, as well as to things. A man who fills his brain with useless knowledge violates that inestimable principle. Thoughts, which turn us away from God, or do not turn us towards Him, constitute impediments in our way. In this connection we may consider the definition of knowledge contained in the 13th chapter of the Gita. We are there told, that humility (*amanitvam*) etc. constitute knowledge, and all the rest is ignorance. If this is true,—and there is no doubt that it is true,—much that we hug today as knowledge is ignorance pure and simple, and therefore only does us harm, instead of conferring any benefit. It makes the mind wander, and even reduces it to a vacuity, and discontent.

flourishes in endless ramifications of evil. Needless to say, this is not a plea for inertia. Every moment of our life should be filled with mental or physical activity, but that activity should be *sattvika*, tending to Truth. One who has consecrated his life to service cannot be idle for a single moment. But we have to learn to distinguish between good activity and evil activity. This discernment goes naturally with a single-minded devotion to service.

## VII FEARLESSNESS

Every reader of the Gita knows, that fearlessness heads the list of the Divine Attributes enumerated in the 16th chapter. Whether this is merely due to the exigencies of metre, or whether the pride of place has been deliberately yielded to fearlessness, is more than I can say. In my opinion, however, fearlessness richly deserves the first rank assigned to it. For it is indispensable for the growth of the other noble qualities. How can one seek Truth, or cherish Love, without fearlessness? As Pritam says, 'the path of Hari (the Lord) is the path of the brave, not of cowards' Hari here means Truth, and the brave are those armed with fearlessness, not with the sword, the rifle and the like. These are taken up only by those who are possessed by fear.

Fearlessness connotes freedom from all external fear, — fear of disease, bodily injury and death, of

dispossession, of losing one's nearest and dearest, of losing reputation or giving offence, and so on. One who overcomes the fear of death does not surmount all other fears, as is commonly but erroneously supposed. Some of us do not fear death, but flee from the minor ills of life. Some are ready to die themselves, but cannot bear their loved ones being taken away from them. Some misers will put up with all this, will part even with their lives, but not their property; others will do any number of black deeds in order to uphold their supposed prestige. Some will swerve from the strait and narrow path, which lies clear before them, simply because they are afraid of incurring the world's odium. The seeker after Truth must conquer all these fears. He should be ready to sacrifice his all in the quest of Truth, even as Harishchandra did. The story of Harishchandra may be only a parable, but every seeker will bear witness to its truth from his personal experience, and therefore that story is as precious as any historical fact.

Perfect fearlessness can be attained only by him who has realized the Supreme, as it implies freedom from delusions. One can always progress towards this goal by determined and constant endeavour, and by cultivating self-confidence.

As I have stated at the very outset, we must give up all external fears. But the internal foes we must always fear. We are rightly afraid of animal passion, anger, and the like. External fears cease of their own accord, when once we have conquered these traitors

within the camp. All such fears revolve round the body as the centre, and will therefore disappear, as soon as we get rid of attachment for the body. We thus find, that all external fear is the baseless fabric of our own vision. Fear has no place in our hearts, when we have shaken off attachment for wealth, for family and for the body 'Enjoy\* the things of the earth by renouncing them' is a noble precept. Wealth, family and body will be there, just the same, we have only to change our attitude towards them. All these are not ours, but God's. Nothing whatever in this world is ours. Even we ourselves are His. Why then should we entertain any fears? The Upanishad therefore directs us 'to give up attachment for things, while we enjoy them'. That is to say, we must be interested in them, not as proprietors, but only as trustees. He, on whose behalf we hold them, will give us the strength and the weapons requisite for defending them against all usurpers. When we thus cease to be masters, and reduce ourselves to the rank of servants, humbler than the very dust under our feet, all fears will roll away like mists, we shall attain ineffable peace, and see Satyanarayan (the God of Truth) face to face.

## VIII

### REMOVAL OF UNTOUCHABILITY

This too is a new observance, like control of the palate, and may even appear a little strange. But it is of vital importance. Untouchability means pollution by the touch of certain persons by reason of their birth in a particular state or family. In the words of Akha, it is an excrescence. In the guise of religion, it is always in the way, and corrupts religion.

None can be born untouchable, as all are sparks of one and the same Fire. It is wrong to treat certain human beings as untouchables from birth. It is also wrong to entertain false scruples about touching a dead body, which should be an object of pity and respect. It is only out of considerations of health, that we bathe after handling a dead body, or after an application of oil, or a shave. A man who does not bathe in such cases may be looked upon as dirty, but surely not as a sinner. A mother may be 'untouchable' so long as she has not bathed, or washed her hands and feet after cleaning up her child's mess, but if a child happened to touch her, it would not be polluted by the touch.

But *Bhangis*, *Dhedhs*, *Chamars* and the like are contemptuously looked down upon as untouchables from birth. They may bathe for years with any amount of soap, dress well and wear the marks of *Vaishnavas*, read the Gita every day and follow a learned pro-



fession, and yet they remain untouchables. This is rank irreligion fit only to be destroyed. By treating removal of untouchability as an Ashram observance, we assert our belief, that untouchability is not only not a part and parcel of Hinduism, but a plague, which it is the bounden duty of every Hindu to combat. Every Hindu, therefore, who considers it a sin, should atone for it by fraternizing with untouchables, associating with them in a spirit of love and service, deeming himself purified by such acts, redressing their grievances, helping them patiently to overcome ignorance and other evils due to the slavery of ages, and inspiring other Hindus to do likewise.

When one visualizes the removal of untouchability from this spiritual standpoint, its material and political results sink into insignificance, and we befriend the so-called untouchables, regardless of such results. Seekers after Truth will never waste a thought on the material consequences of their quest, which is not a matter of policy with them, but something interwoven with the very texture of their lives.

When we have realized the supreme importance of this observance, we shall discover, that the evil it seeks to combat is not restricted in its operation to the suppressed classes. Evil, no bigger than a mustard seed in the first instance, soon assumes gigantic proportions, and in the long run destroys that upon which it settles. Thus this evil has now assailed all departments of life. We have hardly enough time even to look after ourselves, thanks to the never ending

ablutions, and exclusive preparation of food necessitated by false notions of untouchability. While pretending to pray to God, we offer worship not to God, but to ourselves.

This observance, therefore, is not fulfilled, merely by making friends with 'untouchables', but by loving all life as our own selves. Removal of untouchability means love for, and service of, the whole world, and thus merges into *ahimsa*. Removal of untouchability spells the breaking down of barriers between man and man, and between the various orders of Being. We find such barriers erected everywhere in the world, but here we have been mainly concerned with the untouchability which has received religious sanction in India, and reduced lakhs and crores of human beings to a state bordering on slavery.

## IX

### BREAD LABOUR

The law, that to live man must work, first came home to me upon reading Tolstoy's writing on Bread labour. But even before that I had begun to pay homage to it after reading Ruskin's *Unto this Last*. The divine law, that man must earn his bread by labouring with his own hands, was first stressed by a Russian writer named T. M. Bondaref. Tolstoy advertised it and gave it wider publicity. In my view, the same principle has been set forth in the third chapter of the Gita where we are told, that he who eats without offering sacrifice eats stolen food. Sacrifice here can only mean Bread labour.

Reason too leads us to an identical conclusion. How can a man, who does not do body labour, have the right to eat? 'In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat thy bread,' says the Bible. A millionaire cannot carry on for long, and will soon get tired of his life, if he rolls in his bed all day long, and is even helped to his food. He therefore induces hunger by exercise, and helps himself to the food he eats. If every one, whether rich or poor, has thus to take exercise in some shape or form, why should it not assume the form of productive, i.e. Bread labour? No one asks the cultivator to take breathing exercise or to work his muscles. And more than nine tenths of humanity lives by tilling the soil. How much happier,

healthier and more peaceful would the world become, if the remaining tenth followed the example of the overwhelming majority, at least to the extent of labouring enough for their food! And many hardships, connected with agriculture, would be easily redressed, if such people took a hand in it. Again invidious distinctions of rank would be abolished, when every one without exception acknowledged the obligation of Bread labour. It is common to all the *varnas*. There is a worldwide conflict between capital and labour, and the poor envy the rich. If all worked for their bread distinctions of rank would be obliterated, the rich would still be there, but they would deem themselves only trustees of their property and would use it mainly in the public interest.

Bread labour is a veritable blessing to one who would observe Non-violence, worship Truth, and make the observance of *brahmacharya* a natural act. This labour can truly be related to agriculture alone. But at present at any rate, everybody is not in a position to take to it. A person can therefore spin or weave, or take up carpentry or smithery, instead of tilling the soil, always regarding agriculture however to be the ideal. Every one must be his own scavenger. Evacuation is as necessary as eating, and the best thing would be for every one to dispose of his own waste. If this is impossible, each family should see to its own scavenging. I have felt for years, that there must be something radically wrong, where scavenging has been made the concern of a separate

class in society. We have no historical record of the man, who first assigned the lowest status to this essential sanitary service. Whoever he was, he by no means did us a good. We should, from our very childhood, have the idea impressed upon our minds that we are all scavengers, and the easiest way of doing so is, for every one who has realized this, to commence Bread labour as a scavenger. Scavenging, thus intelligently taken up, will help one to a true appreciation of the equality of man.

## X

### TOLERANCE, i.e. EQUALITY OF RELIGIONS—I

I do not like the word tolerance, but could not think of a better one. Tolerance may imply a gratuitous assumption of the inferiority of other faiths to one's own, whereas *ahimsa* teaches us to entertain the same respect for the religious faiths of others as we accord to our own, thus admitting the imperfection of the latter. This admission will be readily made by a seeker of Truth, who follows the law of Love. If we had attained the full vision of Truth, we would no longer be mere seekers, but would have become one with God, for Truth is God. But being only seekers, we prosecute our quest, and are conscious of our imperfection. And if we are imperfect ourselves, religion as conceived by us must also be imperfect. We have not realized religion in its perfection, even as we have not realized God. Religion of our

conception, being thus imperfect, is always subject to a process of evolution and re-interpretation. Progress towards Truth, towards God, is possible only because of such evolution. And if all faiths outlined by men are imperfect, the question of comparative merit does not arise. All faiths constitute a revelation of Truth, but all are imperfect and liable to error. Reverence for other faiths need not blind us to their faults. We must be keenly alive to the defects of our own faith also, yet not leave it on that account, but try to overcome those defects. Looking at all religions with an equal eye, we would not only not hesitate, but would think it our duty, to blend into our faith every acceptable feature of other faiths.

The question then arises. Why should there be so many different faiths? The Soul is one, but the bodies which She animates are many. We cannot reduce the number of bodies, yet we recognize the unity of the Soul. Even as a tree has a single trunk, but many branches and leaves, so is there one true and perfect Religion, but it becomes many, as it passes through the human medium. The one Religion is beyond all speech. Imperfect men put it into such language as they can command, and their words are interpreted by other men equally imperfect. Whose interpretation is to be held to be the right one? Everybody is right from his own standpoint, but it is not impossible that everybody is wrong. Hence the necessity for tolerance, which does not mean indifference towards one's own faith, but a more intelligent

and purer love for it. Tolerance gives us spiritual insight, which is as far from fanaticism as the north pole from the south. True knowledge of religion breaks down the barriers between faith and faith. Cultivation of tolerance for other faiths will impart to us a truer understanding of our own.

Tolerance obviously does not disturb the distinction between right and wrong, or good and evil. The reference here throughout is naturally to the principal faiths of the world. They are all based on common fundamentals. They have all produced great saints.

## XI

### TOLERANCE, *i.e.* EQUALITY OF RELIGIONS—II

I would linger yet a while on tolerance. My meaning will perhaps become clearer, if I describe here some of my experiences. In Phoenix we had our daily prayers in the same way as in Sabarmati, and Musalmans as well as Christians attended them along with Hindus. The late Sheth Rustomji and his children too frequented the prayer meetings. Rustomji Sheth very much liked the Gujarati *bhajan*, '*Mane valun*,' 'Dear, dear to me is the name of Rama.' If my memory serves me right, Maganlal or Kashi was once leading us in singing this hymn, when Rustomji Sheth exclaimed joyously, 'Say the name of Hormazd instead of name of Rama.' His suggestion was readily taken up, and after that whenever the

Sheth was present, and sometimes even when he was not, we put in the name of Hormazd in place of Rama. The late Husain, son of Daud Sheth, often stayed at the Phoenix Ashram, and enthusiastically joined our prayers. To the accompaniment of an organ, he used to sing in a very sweet voice the song '*Har bahare bagh*,' 'The garden of this world has only a momentary bloom.' He taught us all this song, which we also sang at prayers. Its inclusion in our *Bhajanavali* is a tribute to truth-loving Husain's memory. I have never met a young man who practised Truth more devotedly than Husain. Joseph Royeppen often came to Phoenix. He is a Christian, and his favourite hymn was '*Vaishnava jana*', 'He is a *Vaishnava* (servant of the Lord), who succours people in distress.' He loved music, and once sang this hymn, saying 'Christian' in place of *Vaishnava*. The others accepted his reading with alacrity, and I observed that this filled Joseph's heart with joy.

When I was turning over the pages of the sacred books of different faiths for my own satisfaction, I became sufficiently familiar for my purpose with Christianity, Islam, Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Hinduism. In reading these texts, I can say, that I was equiminded towards all these faiths, although perhaps I was not then conscious of it. Refreshing my memory of those days, I do not find I ever had the slightest desire to criticize any of those religions merely because they were not my own, but read each sacred book in a spirit of reverence, and found the same-



fundamental morality in each. Some things I did not understand then, and do not understand even now, but experience has taught me, that it is a mistake hastily to imagine, that anything that we cannot understand is necessarily wrong. Some things which I did not understand first have since become as clear as daylight. Equimindedness helps us to solve many difficulties and even when we criticize anything, we express ourselves with a humility and a courtesy, which leave no sting behind them.

The acceptance of the doctrine of Equality of Religions does not abolish the distinction between religion and irreligion. We do not propose to cultivate toleration for irreligion. That being so, some people might object, that there would be no room left for equimindedness, if every one took his own decision as to what was religion and what was irreligion. If we follow the law of Love, we shall not bear any hatred towards the irreligious brother. On the contrary, we shall love him, and therefore either we shall bring him to see the error of his ways, or he will point out our error, or each will tolerate the other's difference of opinion. If the other party does not observe the law of Love, he may be violent to us. If however we cherish real love for him, it will overcome his bitterness in the end. All obstacles in our path will vanish, if only we observe the golden rule, that we must not be impatient with those whom we may consider to be in error, but must be prepared, if need be, to suffer in our own person.

## XII

### HUMILITY

Humility cannot be an observance by itself. For it does not lend itself to being deliberately practised. It is however an indispensable test of *ahimsa*. In one who has *ahimsa* in him it becomes part of his very nature.

A preliminary draft of the rules and regulations of the Satyagraha Ashram was circulated among friends, including the late Sir Gurudas Banerji. He suggested, that humility should be accorded a place among the observances. This suggestion could not then be accepted for the reason that I have just mentioned.

But although humility is not one of the observances, it is certainly as essential as, and perhaps even more essential, than any of them. Only it has never come to any one by practice. Truth can be cultivated as well as Love. But to cultivate humility is tantamount to cultivating hypocrisy. Humility must not be here confounded with mere manners or etiquette. One man will sometimes prostrate himself before another, although his heart is full of bitterness against him. This is not humility, but cunning. A man may chant *Ramanama*, or tell his beads all day long, and move in society like a sage, but if he is selfish at heart, he is not meek, but only hypocritical.

A humble person is not himself conscious of his

humility. Truth and the like perhaps admit of measurement, but not humility. Inborn humility can never remain hidden, and yet the possessor is unaware of its existence. The story of Vasishtha and Vishvamitra furnishes a very good case in point. Humility should make the possessor *realize*, that he is as nothing. Directly we imagine ourselves to be something, there is egotism. If a man who keeps observances is proud of keeping them, they will lose much, if not all of their value. And a man who is proud of his virtue often becomes a curse to society. Society will not appreciate it, and he himself will fail to reap any benefit from it. Only a little thought will suffice to convince us, that all creatures are nothing more than a mere atom in this universe. Our existence as embodied beings is purely momentary, what are a hundred years in eternity? But if we shatter the chains of egotism, and melt into the ocean of humanity, we share its dignity. To feel that we are something is to set up a barrier between God and ourselves; to cease feeling that we are something is to become one with God. A drop in the ocean partakes of the greatness of its parent, although it is unconscious of it. But it is dried up, as soon as it enters upon an existence independent of the ocean. We do not exaggerate, when we say that life on earth is a mere bubble.

A life of service must be one of humility. He who would sacrifice his life for others has hardly time to reserve for himself a place in the sun. Inertia must

not be mistaken for humility, as it has been in Hinduism. True humility means most strenuous and constant endeavour entirely directed towards the service of humanity. God is continuously in action without resting for a single moment. If we would serve Him or become one with Him, our activity must be as unwearied as His. There may be momentary rest in store for the drop which is separated from the ocean, but not for the drop in the ocean, which knows no rest. The same is the case with ourselves. As soon as we become one with the ocean in the shape of God, there is no more rest for us, nor indeed do we need rest any longer. Our very sleep is action. For we sleep with the thought of God in our hearts. This restlessness constitutes true rest. This never-ceasing agitation holds the key to peace ineffable. This supreme state of total surrender is difficult to describe, but not beyond the bounds of human experience. It has been attained by many dedicated souls, and may be attained by ourselves as well. This is the goal which we of the Satyagraha Ashram have set before ourselves, all our observances and activities are calculated to assist us in reaching it. We shall reach it some day all unawares if we have truth in us.

### XIII /

## IMPORTANCE OF VOWS

In this series I have dealt cursorily with the importance of vows, but it is perhaps necessary to consider at some length their bearing on a godly life. There is a powerful school of thinkers, who concede the propriety of observing certain rules, but do not acknowledge the necessity of vows. They go even so far as to suggest, that vows are a sign of weakness, and may even be harmful. Again they argue, that if a rule is subsequently discovered to be inconvenient or sinful, to adhere to it after such discovery would be positively wrong. They say : It is a good thing to abstain from liquor, but what harm is there in taking it occasionally, say on medical grounds? A pledge of total abstinence would be a needless handicap, and as with liquor, so with other things.

A vow means unflinching determination, and helps us against temptations. Determination is worth nothing, if it bends before discomfort. The universal experience of humanity supports the view, that progress is impossible without inflexible determination. There cannot be a vow to commit a sin, in the case of a vow, first thought to be meritorious but later found to be sinful, there arises a clear necessity to give it up. But no one takes, or ought to take, vows about dubious matters. Vows can be taken only on points of universally recognized principles.

The possibility of sin in such a case is more or less imaginary. A devotee of Truth cannot stop to consider if someone will not be injured by his telling the truth, for he believes that truth can never do harm. So also about total abstinence. The abstainer will either make an exception as regards medicine, or will be prepared to risk his life in fulfilment of his full vow. What does it matter, if we happen to lose our lives through a pledge of total abstinence? There can be no guarantee, that our lives will be prolonged by liquor, and even if life is thus prolonged for a moment it may be ended the very next through some other agency. On the other hand, the example of a man, who gives up his life rather than his pledge, is likely to wean drunkards from liquor, and thus become a great power for good in the world. Only they can hope some time to see God, who have nobly determined to bear witness to the faith that is in them, even at the cost of life itself.

Taking vows is not a sign of weakness, but of strength. To do at any cost something that one ought to do constitutes a vow. It becomes a bulwark of strength. A man who says that he will do something 'as far as possible' betrays either his pride or his weakness. I have noticed in my own case, as well as in the case of others, that the limitation 'as far as possible' provides a fatal loophole. To do something 'as far as possible' is to succumb to the very first temptation. There is no sense in saying, that we will observe truth 'as far as possible'. Even as no

businessman will look at a note in which a man promises to pay a certain amount on a certain date 'as far as possible,' so will God refuse to accept a promissory note drawn by a man, who will observe truth as far as possible.

God is the very image of the vow. God would cease to be God if He swerved from His own laws even by a hair's breadth. The sun is a great keeper of observances; hence the possibility of measuring time and publishing almanacs. All business depends upon men fulfilling their promises. Are such promises less necessary in character building or self-realization? We should therefore never doubt the necessity of vows for the purpose of self-purification and self-realization.

## XIV

### YAJNA or SACRIFICE

We make frequent use of the word *yajna*. We have raised spinning to the rank of a daily *mahayajna* (primary sacrifice). It is therefore necessary to think out the various implications of the term *yajna*.

*Yajna* means an act directed to the welfare of others, done without desiring any return for it, whether of a temporal or spiritual nature. 'Act' here must be taken in its widest sense, and includes thought and word, as well as deed. 'Others' embraces not only humanity, but all life. Therefore, and also from the standpoint of *ahimsa*, it is not a *yajna* to sacrifice lower animals even with a view to the service of humanity.

It does not matter, that animal sacrifice is alleged to find a place in the Vedas. It is enough for us, that such sacrifice cannot stand the fundamental tests of Truth and Non-violence. I readily admit my incompetence in Vedic scholarship. But the incompetence, so far as this subject is concerned, does not worry me, because even if the practice of animal sacrifice be proved to have been a feature of Vedic society, it can form no precedent for a votary of *ahimsa*.

Again a primary sacrifice must be an act, which conduces the most to the welfare of the greatest number in the widest area, and which can be performed by the largest number of men and women with the least trouble. It will not therefore, be a *yajna*, much less a *mahayajna*, to wish or to do ill to any one else, even in order to serve a so-called higher interest. And the Gita teaches, and experience testifies, that all action that cannot come under the category of *yajna* promotes bondage.

The world cannot subsist for a single moment without *yajna* in this sense, and therefore the Gita, after having dealt with true wisdom in the second chapter, takes up in the third the means of attaining it, and declares in so many words, that *yajna* came with the Creation itself. This body therefore has been given us, only in order that we may serve all Creation with it. And therefore, says the Gita, he who eats without offering *yajna* eats stolen food. Every single act of one who would lead a life of purity should be in the nature of *yajna*. *Yajna* having come



to us with our birth, we are debtors all our lives, and thus for ever bound to serve the universe. And even as a bonds slave receives food, clothing and so on from the master whom he serves, so should we gratefully accept such gifts as may be assigned to us by the Lord of the universe. What we receive must be called a gift, for as debtors we are entitled to no consideration for the discharge of our obligations. Therefore we may not blame the Master, if we fail to get it. Our body is His to be cherished or cast away according to His will. This is not a matter for complaint or even pity, on the contrary, it is a natural and even a pleasant and desirable state, if only we realize our proper place in God's scheme. We do indeed need strong faith, if we would experience this supreme bliss. "Do not worry in the least about yourself, leave all worry to God,"—this appears to be the commandment in all religions.

This need not frighten any one. He who devotes himself to service with a clear conscience will day by day grasp the necessity for it in greater measure, and will continually grow richer in faith. The path of service can hardly be trodden by one, who is not prepared to renounce self-interest, and to recognize the conditions of his birth. Consciously or unconsciously every one of us does render some service or other. If we cultivate the habit of doing this service deliberately, our desire for service will steadily grow stronger, and will make not only for our own happiness but that of the world at large.

## XV

### MORE ABOUT *YAJNA*

I wrote about *yajna* last week, but feel like writing more about it. It will perhaps be worth while further to consider a principle which has been created along with mankind *Yajna* is duty to be performed, or service to be rendered, all the twenty-four hours of the day, and hence a maxim like *परोपकाराय सत्ता विभूतयः ।* is inappropriate, if *उपकार* has any taste of favour about it. To serve without desire is to favour not others, but ourselves, even as in discharging a debt we serve only ourselves, lighten our burden and fulfil our duty. Again, not only the good, but all of us are bound to place our resources at the disposal of humanity And if such is the law, as evidently it is, indulgence ceases to hold a place in life and gives way to renunciation. The duty of renunciation differentiates mankind from the beast

Some object, that life thus understood becomes dull and devoid of art, and leaves no room for the householder. But renunciation here does not mean abandoning the world and retiring into the forest. The spirit of renunciation should rule all the activities of life A householder does not cease to be one, if he regards life as a duty rather than as an indulgence A merchant, who operates in the sacrificial spirit, will have crores passing through his hands, but he will, if he follows the law, use his abilities for

service. He will therefore not cheat or speculate, will lead a simple life, will not injure a living soul and will lose millions rather than harm anybody. Let no one run away with the idea that this type of merchant exists only in my imagination. Fortunately for the world, it does exist in the West as well as in the East. It is true, such merchants may be counted on one's fingers' ends, but the type ceases to be imaginary, as soon as even one living specimen can be found to answer to it. All of us know of a philanthropic tailor in Wadhwan. I know of one such barber. Every one of us knows such a weaver. And if we go deeply into the matter, we shall come across men in every walk of life, who lead dedicated lives. No doubt these sacrificers obtain their livelihood by their work. But livelihood is not their objective, but only a by-product of their vocation. Motilal was a tailor at first, and continued as tailor afterwards. But his spirit was changed, and his work was transmuted into worship. He began to think about the welfare of others, and his life became artistic in the real sense of the term. A life of sacrifice is the pinnacle of art, and is full of true joy. *Yajna* is not *yajna* if one feels it to be burdensome or annoying. Self-indulgence leads to destruction, and renunciation to immortality. Joy has no independent existence. It depends upon our attitude to life. One man will enjoy theatrical scenery, another the ever new scenes which unfold themselves in the sky. Joy, therefore, is a matter of individual and national education. We shall delight in things

which we have been taught to delight in as children. And illustrations can be easily cited of different national tastes

Again, many sacrificers imagine that they are free to receive from the people everything they need, and many things they do not need, because they are rendering disinterested service. Directly this idea sways a man, he ceases to be a servant, and becomes a tyrant over the people

One who would serve will not waste a thought upon his own comforts, which he leaves to be attended to or neglected by his Master on high. He will not therefore encumber himself with everything that comes his way, he will take only what he strictly needs and leave the rest. He will be calm, free from anger and unruffled in mind even if he finds himself inconvenienced. His service, like virtue, is its own reward, and he will rest content with it

Again, one dare not be negligent in service, or be behindhand with it. He, who thinks that he must be diligent only in his personal business, and unpaid public business may be done in any way and at any time he chooses, has still to learn the very rudiments of the science of sacrifice. Voluntary service of others demands the best of which one is capable, and must take precedence over service of self. In fact, the pure devotee consecrates himself to the service of humanity without any reservation whatever.

## XVI

### SWADESHI

Swadeshi is the law of laws enjoined by the present age. Spiritual laws, like Nature's laws, need no enacting; they are self-acting. But through ignorance or other causes man often neglects or disobeys them. It is then that vows are needed to steady his course. A man who is by temperament a vegetarian needs no vow to strengthen his vegetarianism. For the sight of animal food, instead of tempting him, would only excite his disgust. The law of Swadeshi is ingrained in the basic nature of man, but it has today sunk into oblivion. Hence the necessity for the vow of Swadeshi. In its ultimate and spiritual sense, Swadeshi stands for the final emancipation of the soul from her earthly bondage. For this earthly tabernacle is not her natural or permanent abode; it is a hindrance in her onward journey, it stands in the way of her realizing her oneness with all life. A votary of Swadeshi, therefore, in his striving to identify himself with the entire creation, seeks to be emancipated from the bondage of the physical body.

If this interpretation of Swadeshi be correct, then it follows, that its votary will, as a first duty, dedicate himself to the service of his immediate neighbours. This involves exclusion or even sacrifice of the interests of the rest, but the exclusion or the sacrifice would be only in appearance. Pure service of our neighbours can never, from its very nature, result in

disservice to those who are far away, but rather the contrary. 'As with the individual, so with the universe' is an unfailing principle, which we would do well to lay to heart. On the other hand, a man who allows himself to be lured by 'the distant scene,' and runs to the ends of the earth for service, is not only foiled in his ambition, but also fails in his duty towards his neighbours. Take a concrete instance. In the particular place where I live, I have certain persons as my neighbours, some relations and dependants. Naturally, they all feel, as they have a right to, that they have a claim on me, and look to me for help and support. Suppose now I leave them all at once, and set out to serve people in a distant place. My decision would throw my little world of neighbours and dependants out of gear, while my gratuitous knight-errantry would, more likely than not, disturb the atmosphere in the new place. Thus a culpable neglect of my immediate neighbours, and an unintended disservice to the people whom I wish to serve, would be the first fruits of my violation of the principle of Swadeshi.

It is not difficult to multiply such instances. That is why the Gita says 'It is best to die performing one's own duty or *svadharma*: *paradharma* or another's duty is fraught with danger.' Interpreted in terms of one's physical environment, this gives us the law of Swadeshi. What the Gita says with regard to *svadharma* equally applies to Swadeshi, for Swadeshi is *svadharma* applied to one's immediate environment.

It is only when the doctrine of Swadeshi is wrongly understood, that mischief results. For instance, it would be a travesty of the doctrine of Swadeshi, if to coddle my family I set about grabbing money by all means fair or foul. The law of Swadeshi requires no more of me than to discharge my legitimate obligations towards my family by just means, and the attempt to do so will reveal to me the universal code of conduct. The practice of Swadeshi can never do harm to any one, and if it does, it is not *svadharma* but egotism that moves me.

There may arise occasions, when a votary of Swadeshi may be called upon to sacrifice his family at the altar of universal service. Such an act of willing immolation will then constitute the highest service rendered to the family. 'Whosoever saveth his life shall lose it, and whosoever loseth his life for the Lord's sake shall find it' holds good for the family group no less than for the individual. Take another instance. Supposing there is an outbreak of plague in my village, and in trying to serve the victims of the epidemic, I, my wife and children and all the rest of my family are wiped out of existence, then in inducing those dearest and nearest to join me, I will not have acted as the destroyer of my family, but on the contrary as its truest friend. In Swadeshi there is no room for selfishness, or if there is selfishness in it, it is of the highest type, which is not different from the highest altruism. Swadeshi in its purest form is the acme of universal service.

It was by following this line of argument, that I hit upon Khadi as the necessary and the most important corollary of the principle of Swadeshi in its application to society 'What is the kind of service,' I asked myself, 'that the teeming millions of India most need at the present time, that can be easily understood and appreciated by all, that is easy to perform and will at the same time enable the crores of our semi-starved countrymen to live?' and the reply came, that it is the universalizing of Khadi or the spinning-wheel alone, that can fulfil these conditions.

Let no one suppose, that the practice of Swadeshi through Khadi would harm the foreign or Indian mill-owners. A thief, who is weaned from his vice, or is made to return the property that he has stolen, is not harmed thereby. On the contrary, he is the gainer, consciously in the one case, unconsciously in the other. Similarly, if all the opium addicts or drunkards in the world were to shake themselves free from their vice, the canteen keepers or the opium vendors, who would be deprived of their custom, could not be said to be losers. They would be the gainers in the truest sense of the word. The elimination of the wages of sin is never a loss either to the individual concerned or to society, it is pure gain.

It is the greatest delusion to suppose, that the duty of Swadeshi begins and ends with merely spinning some yarn anyhow and wearing Khadi made from it. Khadi is the first indispensable step towards the discharge of Swadeshi *dharma* to society. But one



often meets men, who wear Khadi, while in all other things they indulge their taste for foreign manufactures. Such men cannot be said to be practising Swadeshi. They are simply following the fashion. A votary of Swadeshi will carefully study his environment, and try to help his neighbours wherever possible, by giving preference to local manufactures, even if they are of an inferior grade or dearer in price than things manufactured elsewhere. He will try to remedy their defects, but will not because of their defects give them up in favour of foreign manufactures.

But even Swadeshi, like any other good thing, can be ridden to death if it is made a fetish. That is a danger which must be guarded against. To reject foreign manufactures merely because they are foreign, and to go on wasting national time and money in the promotion in one's country of manufactures for which it is not suited would be criminal folly, and a negation of the Swadeshi spirit. A true votary of Swadeshi will never harbour ill-will towards the foreigner: he will not be actuated by antagonism towards anybody on earth. Swadeshism is not a cult of hatred. It is a doctrine of selfless service, that has its roots in the purest *ahimsa*, i. e. Love.

This note on Swadeshi was not written in Yeravda Mandir in 1930 but outside, after Gandhiji's release in 1931. He did not write it in jail, as he felt he would perhaps be unable to do justice to the subject without encroaching upon the forbidden field of politics. The translation was done by Shri Pyarelal

V. G. D.

# DISCOURSES ON THE GITA

## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

Gandhiji's Gujarati translation of the Gita was published on March 12, 1930, the never-to-be-forgotten day on which he marched to Dandi from Sabarmati. A member of the Ashram who read it found it very difficult to understand and complained about it to Gandhiji who was then in Yeravda prison. Thereupon he wrote a series of letters to the Ashram in which he devoted one letter to each chapter of the Gita, dealing with Chapter XII in the first letter written on November 4, 1930. These letters are here translated into English.

V. G. D.

*St 2016, Pausha vadi 3*

## CHAPTER XII

I propose today to give the substance of Chapter XII which deals with devotion (*bhakti*). Whenever there is a wedding in the Ashram, we ask the couple to learn by heart and ponder over this chapter as one of the five sacrifices they have to offer. Knowledge and action in the absence of devotion are dry as dust and are likely to make us confirmed bond-slaves. Let us therefore commence this study of the Gita with a heart full of devotion.

Arjuna asks the Lord, 'Some devotees adore a personal (*sakara*) God while others worship the Absolute (*nirakara*). Which of these two courses is better?'

The Lord replies, 'Those who fix their minds on Me (as the One Life in all) with perfect faith and are absorbed in Me are My devotees indeed. But those who worship the Absolute and restrain and subdue their senses, are equiminded towards all living beings and serve them without looking on some as of a superior and others as of an inferior grade—they also will come to Me. Neither of these two classes of devotees is superior to the other. But a full realization of the Absolute is almost impossible for an embodied being. The Absolute is devoid of all attributes and thus difficult for men even to imagine. Therefore they are all worshippers of a personal God, whether they are aware of it or not.

‘Do you therefore place your mind in Me (the personal God in the universal form) and offer Me your all. If this is not possible, try to restrain the aberrations of the mind; that is to say, by observing the *yamas* and *nyamas*, and with the help of *pranayama* and yogic exercises, obtain control over the mind. If even this is beyond your capacity, perform all actions for My sake, so that your delusion will be destroyed, and you will be imbued with the spirit of detachment and devotion. If you cannot do even this, renounce the fruits of action, that is, cease to have a desire for the fruits of action, and do the task which is allotted to you. A man can never have any say as regards the fruit of his action, as the nature of the fruit is determined by a number of independent factors. Be you therefore a mere instrument in My hands. I have thus described four methods, none of which is superior to the others. You may adopt any one of the four you like. It may seem as if the path of knowledge (hearing the doctrine, pondering over it, etc.) is easier to take than that of *yamas*, *nyamas*, *pranayama*, *asanas*, etc., meditation in worship is easier still and the renunciation of the fruit the easiest of all. But the same method is not equally well suited for all. And some seekers have to adopt all the four methods, which are inter-connected. You must become a devotee one way or other, you may take any path that leads to this destination.

‘Let me tell you what the true devotee is like. He does not hate or bear ill-will to any living creature.

He looks on all with love and compassion. He is free from the delusion of "I" and "Mine". He reduces himself to zero. Pleasure and pain are equally acceptable to him. He forgives the wrong-doer even as he expects to be forgiven himself. He is always contented with his lot, and is unshakable in his resolve. He dedicates his intellect and mind and all to Me. He never molests his fellow-creatures, these are therefore never afraid of him. He does not allow himself to become perturbed by the world. He is free from exultation, sorrow, anger, fear and the like. He seeks nothing for himself. He is pure and skilful in action. He renounces every undertaking. Although he is firm in his resolve, he is indifferent as regards the success or failure of his action, that is to say, he is not anxious about its result. He is alike to friend and foe. Honour and insult are the same to him. He is silent and content with what comes. He moves freely as if he were alone. He has a steady mind at all times and places. A devotee who behaves like this in faith is dear to me.'

Q. The devotee 'renounces all undertakings.' What does this mean?

A. The devotee will not draw up schemes of future expansion. For example, if a merchant who deals in cloth now has any plans of selling firewood as well in the future, or if he, having one shop only, thinks of opening five more shops, that would be *arambha* (undertaking) on his part, and the devotee will have none of it. This principle is applicable to

service of the nation as well. For instance a worker in the khadi department today will not take up cow-keeping tomorrow, agriculture the day after and medical aid on the fourth day. He will do his best in whatever has come to him. When I am free from egoism, nothing remains for me to do.

सूतरने तातणे मने हरजीअे वाधी ।

जेम ताणे तेम तेमनी रे, मने लागी कटारी प्रेमनी ।

‘The Lord has bound me with a cotton thread, I am His, no matter where He leads me. I have been stabbed with the dagger of love’ A devotee’s every activity is planned by God. It comes to him as in the natural course of things. He therefore rests content with, ‘this, that or anything else’ (येन केनचित् ।). This is the meaning of ‘renouncing all undertakings.’ The devotee does not cease to work; indeed he is nothing if not a worker. He only ceases to think needless thoughts about his work. It is these that he has to renounce.

इदमद्य मया लब्ध इमं प्राप्स्ये मनोरथम् । गीता १६-१३ ।

‘This has been acquired by me today; that purpose I shall gain tomorrow.’—this is the opposite of ‘renouncing undertakings’

## CHAPTER I

When the Pandavas and the Kauravas gathered together on the battle-field of Kurukshetra (the field of Kuru) with their armies, Duryodhana, the king of the Kauravas, approached Drona (his teacher in the science of war) and named the leading warriors on either side. As a signal for the battle to begin, conch-shell horns were sounded on both the sides and Shri Krishna who was Arjuna's charioteer drove his chariot into a place between the two armies. The scene which greeted Arjuna's eyes unnerved him, and he said to Shri Krishna, 'How can I attack these in battle ? I might fight readily enough if I had to fight with strangers, but these are my kinsmen. The Kauravas and the Pandavas are first cousins. We were brought up together. Drona is our teacher as well as the Kauravas'. Bhishma is a revered elder for both. How can I fight with him ? It is true that the Kauravas are criminals and doers of evil deeds. They have wronged the Pandavas and deprived them of their lands. They have insulted the saintly Draupadi. But what shall I gain by killing them ? They are fools indeed. But shall I also be equally foolish ? I have some little knowledge. I can discriminate between right and wrong. I thus see that it is a sin to fight with relatives. Never mind if they have taken wrongful possession of the Pandavas' share in the kingdom. Never mind even if they kill us



But how dare we raise our hand against them? O Krishna, I will not fight with my kith and kin.'

With these words, Arjuna sank down on the seat of the chariot, being overwhelmed by grief.

Here ends the first Chapter which is entitled 'the sorrow of Arjuna'. All of us should feel pain even as Arjuna did. No acquisition of knowledge is possible unless there is in us a sense of something lacking and a desire to know the truth. If a man is not curious even to know what is wrong and what is right, what is the use of religion for him? The battle-field of Kurukshetra only provides the occasion for the dialogue between Arjuna and Krishna. The real Kurukshetra is the human heart, which is also a *dharmakshetra* (the field of righteousness) if we look upon it as the abode of God and invite Him to take hold of it. Some battle or other is fought on this battle-field from day to day. Most of these battles arise from the distinction between 'mine' and 'thine', between kinsmen and strangers. Therefore, as we shall find later on, the Lord tells Arjuna that attraction (*raga*) and repulsion (*dvesha*) lie at the root of sin. When I look upon a person or thing as 'mine', *raga* takes hold of my mind, and when I look upon him as a stranger, aversion or hatred enters the mind. Therefore we must forget the distinction between 'mine' and 'thine'. That is to say, we must give up our likes and dislikes. This is the teaching of the Gita and all other scriptures. To say this is one thing; to practise it is quite another. The Gita is

there to teach us how to practise it We will try to understand the method it recommends

## CHAPTER II

When Arjuna had picked himself a little bit, the Lord rebuked him and said, 'How is it that this delusion has come to you? It is unworthy of a warrior like you' But even then Arjuna stuck to his first position, refused to fight and said, 'If in order to get it, I have to slay elders and other relations, I do not want not only a kingdom on this earth but even the delights of paradise My mind gropes in darkness I do not know where my duty lies I put myself into your hands. Please guide me'

Finding that Arjuna was bewildered and aspired after knowledge, Krishna had pity on him and proceeded to explain things to him 'Your sorrow is for nothing, and you utter words about wisdom without understanding. You have evidently forgotten the distinction between the body and the embodied soul. The soul never dies, but the body passes through childhood, youth and age and perishes in the end. The body is born but the soul is birthless and unchanging It ever was, is now and will be there for all time to come For whom then do you grieve? Your grief arises from a delusion You look upon these Kauravas as your own, but you are aware that their bodies will come to an end. And as for the souls which inhabit these bodies, no one can destroy

them. The soul cannot be wounded by weapons, burned by fire, dried by the wind or drowned in water. Then again, consider this from the standpoint of your duty as a warrior with an army under his command. If you refuse to fight this righteous war, the consequences will be the very reverse of what you expect and you will become an object of ridicule. You have always enjoyed the reputation of being a brave man. But if now you withdraw from the battle, you will be supposed to have been driven from it by fear. If it were part of your duty to flee in the face of danger, disgrace would not matter, but if you retire from battle now, you will have failed to discharge your duty, and people will be justified in condemning your flight.

‘Thus far, I have tried to reason out things, draw a distinction between the body and the soul and remind you of your duty as a warrior. But let me now explain Karmayoga (the method of action). A practitioner of Karmayoga never comes to harm. It has nothing to do with chopping logic. It is something to be translated into action and experience. An ounce of practice is more profitable than tons of argumentation. And this practice too must not be vitiated by speculation about its fruit. Literalists perform Vedic rites directed to the acquisition of material rewards. If one rite does not yield the expected fruit, they have recourse to another, and being disappointed once more, they take up a third. And thus they suffer from utter mental confusion. As a

matter of fact, it is up to us to do our duty without wasting a single thought on the fruits of our action. To fight is the duty you have to discharge at present. Gain or loss, defeat or victory, is not in your power. Why should you carry the needless burden of thinking about them and be like the dog who walks under a cart and imagines that it is being drawn by himself and not by the bullocks? Defeat and victory, heat and cold, pleasure and pain come to a man in turn and he must put up with them. Without worrying about the fruit of action, a man must devote himself to the performance of his duty with an evenness of temper. This is yoga, or skill in action. The success of an act lies in performing it, and not in its result, whatever it is. Therefore be calm and do your duty clear of consequences.

On hearing all this Arjuna said, 'The course of conduct you have mapped for me seems to be beyond my capacity. Not to worry about defeat or victory, not to waste a thought on the result,—how can one attain such an evenness of temper and steadfastness in spirit? How does a man with such attainments behave, and how are we to recognize him?'

The Lord replied, 'O king, one who renounces all the cravings which torment the heart and derives his contentment from within himself is said to be a *sthitaprajna* or *samadhustha* (one stable in spirit). He is unruffled in adversity, and he does not hanker after happiness. Pleasure and pain are felt through the five senses. Therefore this wise man draws his senses

away from sense objects even as a tortoise draws in his limbs. The tortoise withdraws into his shell when he apprehends danger. But in the case of human beings sense objects are ready to attack the senses at all times; therefore their senses must always be drawn in, and they should be ever ready to fight against sense objects. This is the real battle. Some people resort to self-mortification and fasting as weapons of defence against sense objects. These measures have their limited use. The senses do not make for sense objects so long as a man is fasting, but fasting alone does not destroy his relish for them. On the other hand that relish may be heightened when the fast is broken, and a man can get rid of it only with the grace of God. The senses are so powerful that they drag a man behind them by force if he is not on his guard. Therefore a man must always keep them under control. This end he can achieve only if he turns his eyes inward, realizes God Who resides in his heart and is devoted to Him. One who thus looks upon Me as His goal and surrenders his all to Me, keeping his senses in control, is a yogi stable in spirit. On the other hand if a man is not master of his senses, he is always musing on the objects of sense and conceives an attachment for them, so that he can hardly think of anything else. From this attachment arises desire; and when the desire is thwarted he gets angry. Anger drives him nearly mad. He cannot understand what he is about. He thus loses his memory, behaves in a disorderly manner and

comes to an ignoble end. When a man's senses rove at will, he is like a rudderless ship which is at the mercy of the gale and is broken to pieces on the rocks. Men should therefore abandon all desires and restrain their senses, so that these do not indulge in undesirable activity. The eyes then will look straight and that too only at holy objects, the ears will listen to hymns in praise of God or to cries of distress, hands and feet will be engaged in service. Indeed all the organs of sense and of action will be employed in helping a man to do his duty and making him a fit recipient of the grace of God. And once the grace of God has descended upon him, all his sorrows are at an end. As snow melts in the sunshine, all pain vanishes when the grace of God shines upon him and he is said to be stable in spirit. But if a man is not stable-minded, how can he think good thoughts? Without good thoughts there is no peace, and without peace there is no happiness. Where a stable-minded man sees things clear as daylight, the unstable man distracted by the turmoil of the world is as good as blind. On the other hand what is pure in the eyes of the worldly wise looks unclean to and repels the stable-minded man. Rivers continuously flow into the sea, but the sea remains unmoved, in the same way all sense objects come to the yogi, but he always remains calm like the sea. Thus one who abandons all desires, is free from pride and selfishness and behaves as one apart, finds peace. This is the condition of a perfect man of God, and he who is

established therein even at the final hour is saved (lit. set free, *mukta*).’

### CHAPTER III

When Krishna had thus set forth the marks of identification for a *sthita-prajna* person, Arjuna received the impression that one had only to sit quiet in order to attain such a state, as Krishna had not made the slightest reference to any need for action on his part. He therefore asked Krishna, ‘It seems as if you hold that knowledge is superior to action. If so, why are you urging me to this terrible deed and thus confusing my mind? Pease tell me clearly where my welfare lies.’

Krishna replied ‘O sinless Arjuna, since the beginning of time seekers have taken one or the other of two different paths. In one of these the pride of place is given to knowledge and in the other it is given to action. But you will find that freedom from action cannot be attained without action, that wisdom never comes to a man simply on account of his having ceased to act. Man does not become perfect merely by renouncing everything. Don’t you see that every one of us is doing something or other all the time? Our very nature impels us to action. Such being the law of nature, one who sits with folded hands but lets his mind dwell on the objects of sense is a fool and may even be called a hypocrite. Rather than indulge in such senseless inactivity, is it not

better that a man should control the senses, overcome his likes and dislikes, and engage himself in some activity or other without fuss and in a spirit of detachment? Do your allotted duty, restraining the organs of sense, for that is better than inaction. An idler will only meet his end the sooner for his idleness. But while acting, remember that action leads to bondage unless it is performed in a spirit of sacrifice. Sacrifice (*yajna*) means exerting oneself for the benefit of others, in a word, service. And where service is rendered for service's sake, there is no room for attachment, likes and dislikes. Perform such a sacrifice; render such service. When Brahma created the universe, He created sacrifice along with it, as it were, and said to mankind, "Go forth into the world; serve one another and prosper. Look upon all creatures as gods. Serve and propitiate those gods, so that being pleased they will be gracious to you and fulfil your wishes unasked." Therefore understand that whoever enjoys the fruits of the earth, without serving the people and without having first given them their share, is a thief. And he who enjoys them after having given all creatures their share is entitled to such enjoyment and is thus freed from sin. On the other hand, those who labour only for themselves are sinners and eat the fruit of sin. It is a law of nature that creatures are sustained by food, food production depends on the rains, and the rains descend on the earth on account of *yajna*, that is to say, the labour of all creatures. There is no rain where there are no



creatures, and it does rain where they are there. All live by labour; none can remain idle and live, and if this is true of the lower forms of life, it is still more applicable to man. Action takes its origin from Brahma and Brahma from the imperishable *brahma*; therefore the imperishable *brahma* is present in all kinds of sacrifice or service. And whoever breaks this chain of mutual service is a sinner and he lives in vain.

‘When a man enjoys peace of mind and contentment, it may be said that there is nothing left for him to do. He does not stand to gain by action or by inaction. He has no personal interests to serve; and yet he must not cease to offer sacrifice. Therefore do your duty from day to day without entertaining likes and dislikes and in a spirit of detachment. He who acts in such a spirit enjoys the beatific vision. Then again if even a selfless king like Janaka reached perfection all the while working for the good of the people, how can you behave in a way different from his? Whatever a good and great man does, common people imitate. Take My own case for instance. I have nothing to gain by action, and yet ceaselessly do I pour myself in action. Hence it is that people too go on working more or less. But what would happen if I ceased to work? The world would collapse if the sun, the moon and the stars ceased to move. And it is I who set them in motion and regulate their activity. But there is a difference between My attitude and the attitude of the common

man I act in the spirit of perfect detachment while he harbours attachment and works in his own interest. If a wise man like you ceased to act, others too would do the same and their minds would be unsettled. Therefore do your duty without attachment, so that others might not cease to work and might gradually learn to work without attachment. Man is bound to work in obedience to and in conformity with his own nature. Only a fool thinks that he himself is the doer. To breathe is a part of man's nature, when an insect settles upon the eye, the eyelid moves of its own accord. And nobody says, "I take in the air" or "I move the eyelid". In the same manner why should not all human actions be performed in accordance with the qualities of nature? Why should there be any egoism about it? In order that a man may be able thus to act naturally and without attachment, the best thing for him to do is to dedicate all his actions to Me and perform them without egoism as a mere instrument in My hands. When a man thus gets over selfishness, all his actions are natural and free from taint and he escapes many a trouble. Actions then have no binding force for him. Action being natural, it is sheer egoism to outrage nature and to claim to be inactive. The victim of such egoism will externally appear not to act, but his mind is always active in scheming. This is worse than external activity and has all the greater binding force.

'As a matter of fact the senses feel attraction

and aversion for their respective objects. For instance the ears like to hear some things and do not like to hear other things. The nose likes to smell the rose, and does not like to smell dirt. This is also true of the other organs of sense. Therefore what man has to do is not to submit to these two robbers, namely, attraction and repulsion. If one wishes to escape their attentions, he must not go about in search of action. He must not hanker after this today, that tomorrow and the other thing the day after. But he should hold himself ready to render for the sake of God such service as falls to his share. Thus he will cultivate within himself the feeling that whatever he does is in fact an act of God and not his own, and his egoism will be a thing of the past. This is *svadharma* (one's own duty). One must stick to *svadharma*, for it is the best for himself at any rate. *Paradharma* (another's duty) may appear to be better, but even so it should be looked upon as dangerous. *Moksha* (salvation) lies in embracing death while doing one's own duty.'

When Krishna said that action performed by one who is free from likes and dislikes is sacrifice, Arjuna asked, 'What is it that makes a man commit sin? Very often it seems as if he were driven to sin by some outsider against his own will.'

Krishna replied. 'The slave drivers in this case are Kama (desire) and Krodha (anger). These are like blood brothers. If desire is not satisfied, anger is the inevitable consequence. One who is the slave of desire and anger is said to be inspired by *rajoguna*

(the quality of passion), which is man's greatest enemy and against which he has to fight day in, day out. As dust hides a mirror, smoke suffocates a fire and the womb covers the embryo, even so anger deprives knowledge of its lustre and suffocates it. And desire is insatiable like fire, and taking possession of man's senses, mind and intellect, knocks him down. Therefore first control your senses, and then conquer the mind. When you have done this, the intellect also will obey your orders. For though among the senses, the mind and the intellect, the mind is greater than the senses and the intellect is greater than the mind, the soul is the greatest of all. Man has no idea of his own strength or soul force, and tends to believe that the senses, the mind and the intellect are not amenable to his control. But when once he has gained confidence in soul force, everything else becomes easy as a matter of course. And desire, anger and their countless hosts hold no terror for him who has mastered the senses, the mind and the intelligence.'

I call this chapter the key to an understanding of the Gita, and the gist of it is that life is given us for service and not for enjoyment. We have therefore to impart a sacrificial character to our lives. Intellectual assent to this proposition is only the first step, but such assent and conduct in terms of that assent are bound to rid our heart of its impurities in course of time. But what is real service? In order to obtain the right answer to this question, restraint

of the senses is essential, as it gives us a clearer and clearer vision of the God of truth. Service rendered with selfish motives ceases to be sacrifice. Hence the urgent need for the spirit of detachment. When this is understood, all manner of controversies lose their meaning for us. 'Did Krishna really ask Arjuna to kill his relatives? Could such killing ever be a part of one's duty?' Questions like these are set at rest for ever. When detachment governs our actions, even the weapon raised in order to strike an enemy down falls out of our hand. But a mere pretence of detachment serves no useful purpose. If only we persevere in our effort, detachment may come to us, perhaps the very first day, or may be only after a thousand years. We must not worry over the time this takes, for the effort carries within itself the seeds of success. We must however be on our guard and make sure that it is a genuine effort, and that there is no self-deception. And this is certainly possible for us all.

## CHAPTER IV

The Lord says to Arjuna

'The yoga of selfless action which I commend to you is an ancient truth; I am not propounding any new doctrine I have declared it to you, as you are my devoted friend, in order to heal the conflict in your mind Whenever goodness weakens and evil grows from strength to strength, I incarnate Myself and protect the good and destroy the wicked Those who are aware of this power (*maya*) of Mine are confident that evil is bound to go under. I am always by the good man's side. He never strays from the strait and narrow path and comes to Me at last, for he meditates on Me and hides himself in Me and thus is delivered from passion and anger and is purified by austerity and wisdom As a man sows, so he reaps None can escape from the operation of the laws I have made I established the four *varnas* (classes, not castes) by the different distribution of qualities and actions However I am not their author, for I do not desire the fruits of action and have nothing to do with the merit or demerit arising therefrom This divine *maya* (course of action) is worth knowing All activities prevalent in the world are subject to divine laws, and yet God is not defiled by them Therefore He is and also is not their author And a man who does likewise and acts in a spirit of detachment without being defiled by actions and by

the yearning for their fruit is sure to be saved. In action he sees inaction and he understands at once what is wrong action. Wrong actions are all those that are inspired by desire and cannot be performed in the absence of desire, such for instance as theft, adultery and the like. These simply cannot be done in a spirit of detachment. Therefore those who do the duty that lies nearest without desire and scheming for the fruit of the action may be said to have burnt up their actions in the fire of wisdom (*jnana*). A man who has thus abandoned the attachment to the fruit of action is always contented, always independent. He has his mind under control. He gives up all his possessions. And his activity is natural like the bodily functions of a healthy individual. He is free from any pride or even consciousness that he is acting on his own. He has the realization that he is a mere instrument of the divine will. What does it matter whether he meets with success or with failure? He is neither elated by the one, nor unnerved by the other. All his work is done as a sacrifice (*yajna*), that is to say, as service to the world. He meditates upon God in all his actions and in the end comes to Him.

‘There are many forms of sacrifice, the root of which lies in purity and service, such as, for instance, control of the senses, charity and *pranayama* (breath control) practised with a view to self-purification. Knowledge of these can be acquired from a wise teacher (*guru*) through humility, earnestness and ser-

vice If anybody indulges in various activities which he thinks are *yajna*, without any understanding of what *yajna* is, he will only do harm to himself and to the world It is therefore necessary that all actions should be performed intelligently This wisdom (*jnana*) is not mere book learning In it there is no room for doubt It begins with faith and ends in experience It enables a man to see all beings in himself and to see himself in God so that everything appears to him to be actually informed by God Such wisdom effects the salvation of the worse of sinners It releases the seeker from the bondage of action, so that he is not affected by its results There is nothing else in the world so holy as this wisdom Therefore try to obtain it with a heart full of faith in God and with the senses under control, so that you will enjoy perfect peace of mind'

The third, the fourth and the following fifth chapter should be read together, as they explain to us what the yoga of selfless action (*anasakti*) is and what are the means of practising it If these three chapters are properly understood, the reader will have less difficulty in tackling what follows The remaining chapters deal in detail with the ways and means of achieving *anasakti* We should study the Gita from this point of view, and if we pursue this study, we shall find without much trouble a solution of the problems which confront us from day to day This calls for daily practice Let everybody try it If for instance he is angry, let him remember the verse dealing with



anger and subdue that enemy. Supposing we heartily dislike somebody, or are impatient or gluttonous or in doubt as to whether we should do or should not do something or other, all these difficulties can be solved with the help of Mother Gita if we have faith in it and give it constant study. Our daily recitation of the Gita as well as this series of letters is a means to this end.

## CHAPTER V

Arjuna said, 'You speak highly of wisdom, so that I am inclined to think that action is unnecessary. But then you also praise action, thus making me feel that unselfish performance of action is the thing to do. My mind will be at peace only if you tell me definitely which of the two is better.'

The Lord replied, '*Sannyasa* means wisdom and *Karmayoga* means selfless action. Both of them are good, but if I had to choose between the two, I should say that yoga or selfless action is better. The man who does not hate any one or anything, does not long for anything and is free from the pairs of opposites such as heat and cold, pleasure and pain, is a sannyasi (wise man, lit. one who renounces the world), no matter whether he is or is not a performer of action. He easily casts off the chain that binds him. Only the ignorant speak of wisdom and action as different, not the learned. The fruit of both is the same; both lead to an identical goal. Therefore

He who sees them as one sees truly The man of pure wisdom achieves his object by merely willing it, and has no need to perform an outward act. When the city of Mithila was on fire, others were bound to rush to it and fight the fire But King Janaka contributed to this fight by his mental determination only, for his servants were ready to obey his commands If he had run about with a water pot to quench the fire, he would only have done harm; others would have stared at him and failed to perform their own duty, or at the most would have rushed here and there with a view to the King's safety. But it is not given to every one of us to become a Janaka at once It is indeed a very difficult task to reach a Janaka-like state Only one in a million can reach it as the fruit of service extending over many lives, and it is not a bed of roses either As a man goes on performing selfless action, his thought grows from strength to strength and he less and less resorts to external action But he is hardly conscious of this change, and he has not this change in view either He is devoted only to service, with the result that his power of rendering service increases to such an extent that he hardly seems to rest from service And finally his service is limited to thought alone, just as an object in extraordinary motion seems to be at rest It is obviously improper to say that such a man does nothing But this lofty state can, as a rule, be only imagined, and not experienced Hence my preference for karmayoga Millions

derive the fruit of *sannyasa* (wisdom, lit. renunciation) from selfless action alone. They would fall between two stools if they tried their hand at *sannyasa*. If they take to *sannyasa*, it is very likely that they will become hypocrites, and as they have ceased to perform action, they are lost altogether. But a man who has purified himself by means of selfless action, who has his mind and his senses under control and who has identified himself with all beings, loving them as himself,—such a man stands apart from action although he is acting all the time, and is not bound by it. He talks, he walks, he takes part in normal human activity, but his activity seems to be merely a function of his organs of sense, and he himself seems to be doing nothing. The bodily functions of a physically healthy person are natural and spontaneous. His stomach for instance functions independently of him, he has not to bother about its functioning. Similarly a spiritually healthy person, though acting through his body, is not tainted by it and may be said to be doing nothing. Therefore a man should dedicate all his actions to Brahma (God) and perform them on His behalf, so that in spite of his activity he does not earn either merit or demerit and is untouched by either like a lotus leaf which is untouched by water. Therefore a yogi (man of selfless action), performing action with the body, mind and understanding in a spirit of detachment and without egotism, purifies himself and enters into peace. The a-yogi, on the other hand, being attached

to the fruit of action, is a prisoner bound by his own desires. The yogi lives blissfully in the city with nine gates that is his body, having renounced all actions by his mind, and realized that he himself is not doing or getting done anything at all. The man with a purified soul does not commit sin, nor does he do any meritorious deed. He who acts in a spirit of detachment, having destroyed his egotism and renounced the fruit of action, becomes a mere machine moving at the will and pleasure of the Master Mechanic or an instrument in the hands of God. The question, therefore, of his earning merit or demerit does not arise. On the other hand, the ignorant man is always counting his merit and demerit, and sinking deeper and deeper into the pit, so that in the end the only thing he has earned is demerit. But as regards the man who destroys his own ignorance by wisdom from day to day, his spontaneous actions grow purer and purer, and appear perfect and meritorious in the world's eyes. He sees all things equal. He is equiminded towards a learned and humble Brahma(God)-knowing Brahmin, a cow, an elephant, a dog and a degraded human being who is worse than a beast. That is to say, he serves them all with equal devotion. He does not honour any one of them or treat another with contempt. The man of selfless action holds himself to be the world's debtor, and he repays what he owes to every one else and does him full justice. Here on earth he takes the creation captive and is filled with

the spirit of the Supreme. He is not elated if anybody does something pleasant, nor is he pained if foul abuse is poured upon him. The man attached to the world seeks happiness from outside himself. On the other hand he who acts in a spirit of selfless detachment discovers the spring of eternal peace in himself having withdrawn his mind from external objects. All sensual pleasures are a source of pain. One should resist the rush of desire, anger and the like. The selfless yogi is constantly engaged in doing good to all creatures. His mind is free from doubt. He is not of the world though he is in the world. He turns his eyes inward by means of *pranayama* (control of breath) etc. and conquers desire, fear and anger. He knows Me alone to be the supreme Lord of all, the Friend and the recipient of sacrificial offerings, and enters into My peace.'

## CHAPTER VI

The Lord said 'The man who does his duty without any selfish desire for fruit may be called a *sannyasi* as well as a *yogi*. But he who abstains from action altogether is only an idler. The root of the matter is that one should not allow his mind to flit from one object of desire to another and from that to a third. He who would practise *yoga*, i.e., evenness of temper (*samatvam*), cannot but perform action. The man who has achieved such evenness of temper will be serene, because his mere thoughts are charged with the strength of action. A *yogi* is one who is not attached to the objects of sense or to action and whose mind has ceased to roam restlessly.

'A man can be saved or lost by himself alone. Therefore he becomes his own friend or his own enemy as the case may be. To one who has subdued his mind his soul is a friend, while the soul is an enemy for him who has failed to achieve self-control. The test for self-control is that heat and cold, pleasure and pain, honour and dishonour do not disturb one's inner serenity. He is a *yogi* who is a man of knowledge as well as experience, who is unwavering and master of his senses and to whom gold, stone and earth seem all alike. He regards with an equal eye friend and foe, sinner and saint. With a view to attaining this state a man should stabilize his mind, divest it of all sensual desires, and meditate in soli-

tude on the Supreme Soul. It is not enough to practise yogic *asanas* (postures), etc. In order to achieve evenness of temper, one must scrupulously keep the major observances (*vratas*) such as brahmacharya (chastity) and the like. A man who thus takes his place on a firm seat, keeps the observances and concentrates his mind on God enters into perfect peace.

‘This equanimity is not for one who overeats or merely fasts, nor for one who is too much addicted to sleep or to vigils. Its seeker has to keep a sense of proportion in all his actions such as eating and drinking, sleeping and keeping awake. To overeat one day and fast the next day, to oversleep for a day and keep a vigil the next, to work hard for a day and pass the next in idleness is no characteristic of a yogi. The yogi is stable-minded at all times, and is without effort free from all desires. He is like an unflickering lamp burning in a windless place. He is not tossed to and fro by dramatic events on the world-stage or by his own brain waves. Such mental poise can be acquired by slow but steady effort. The mind is fickle and restless, but it should be gradually stabilized, for one can have peace of mind only when he is firm of understanding. In order thus to stabilize the mind, he should constantly fix it on the soul. He will then see all beings in himself and himself in all beings, for he will see Me in all beings and all beings in Me. He who is absorbed in Me, and sees Me everywhere ceases to be himself, so that he is at all

times attuned to Me irrespective of what he is doing, and is incapable of sin '.

Yoga thus described seemed to Arjuna to be a tall order, and he exclaimed, 'How is one to achieve such equanimity? The human mind is restless like a monkey, and as difficult to control as the wind. How is it to be curbed?'

The Lord replied, 'You are right. But if a man earnestly sets about conquering attachment and aversion, yoga will not be difficult for him to practise. But it should be clear to you that it is not for one who cannot control his mind.'

Then Arjuna posed another question, 'Supposing a man has faith, but is lax in his effort and is thus unsuccessful in perfecting himself, what happens to him? Is he destroyed like a broken cloud in the sky?'

The Lord said, 'Such a man of faith is never lost, for no one who takes the right path ever comes to an evil end. After death he lives for a time in some celestial world according to his merit and is then reborn on the earth into a holy family. But such a birth is difficult to obtain. He then regains the mental impressions developed in his former lives, and struggling harder for perfection, reaches the supreme goal. Thus making an assiduous effort some attain equanimity soon, while others do so after a number of lives in accordance with the measure of their faith and endeavour. This evenness of temper is superior to asceticism, to knowledge and to



sacred rites, for these latter are after all only means to the end of equanimity. Do you therefore become even-minded and a yogi. And even among yogis hold him to be the best who dedicates his all to Me and worships Me alone in full faith.'

*Pranayama* (control of breath) and *asanas* (yogic postures) are referred to appreciatively in this chapter, but we should remember that at the same time the Lord has stressed the need for *brahmacharya*, i.e., keeping the observances calculated to take us nearer and nearer to God. It should be clearly understood that the mere practice of *asanas* and the like can never take us to the goal of even-mindedness. *Asanas* and *pranayama* may be of some slight help in steadying the mind and making it single-purposed, provided that they are practised to that end. Otherwise they are no better than other methods of physical training. They are very useful indeed as physical exercise and I believe that this type of exercise is good for the soul, and may be performed from a bodily standpoint. But I have observed that these practices do only harm when indulged in for the acquisition of supernormal powers (*siddhi*) and the performance of miracles. This chapter should be studied as a summary of the teaching in the preceding three chapters. It cheers us up in our spiritual struggle. We should never be down-hearted and give up the endeavour to reach evenness of temper.

## CHAPTER VII

The Lord said ‘O king, I will tell you how a man who devotes his whole mind to Me, takes refuge in Me and practises karmayoga can have perfect knowledge of Me free from the shadow of a doubt I will declare to you this knowledge based on experience, which having been known, nothing more here remains to be known Hardly one from among thousands strives to acquire this knowledge, and perhaps one only of these strivers make a success of it

‘Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intellect and egoism—this is the eightfold composition of My *prakriti* (nature) This is the lower nature, the other is higher nature, that is, life This world is born of these two natures, that is to say, from the coming together of body and soul Therefore I am the cause of the origin and destruction of all things As pearls are strung on a thread, even so is the world held together by Me Thus I am the taste in the waters, the light in the sun and the moon, the syllable “Om” in the Vedas, the sound in ether, the spirit of enterprise in men, the sweet smell in the earth, the brightness in fire, the life in all that lives, the austerity of ascetics, the intelligence of the intelligent, the pure strength of the strong, and the craving of all beings which does not run counter to righteousness In short you should understand that all that belongs

to the states of \*sattva, \*rajas and \*tamas proceeds from Me, and depends upon Me alone. People deluded by these three qualities (*gunas*) do not recognize Me Who am imperishable. My Maya made of these qualities is hard to overcome. But those who take refuge in Me pass beyond this Maya, that is, the three *gunas*. Foolish evil-doers cannot think of coming to Me even in their dreams. Being steeped in illusion, they roam in darkness and do not acquire knowledge. But the doers of good deeds worship Me. Some of them do so in order to obtain relief in their distress, others seek for knowledge of Me. A third group are inspired by a desire to get something for themselves while others worship Me with understanding, thinking it to be their duty. Worship of Me means service of My creation. This service is rendered by some because of their misery, by others in order to gain some advantage, by a third group out of curiosity as regards the outcome of such activity and by a fourth group who know what they are about and for whom service of others is something that they cannot do without. These last are My wise devotees, dearer to Me than all the rest of them. Or rather they know Me best and are nearest to Me. Their wisdom is the fruit of a quest extending over a number of lives, and when they have acquired this wisdom, they see nothing in the world except Me, Vasudeva. But those who are smitten by a

\* harmony, passion, sloth, or rhythm, activity, inertia

variety of desires resort to other deities. I alone, however, am the giver of rewards commensurate with the devotion of each. The achievement too of these devotees of limited understanding is limited, but they rest content with it. These men in their ignorance imagine that they know Me through the senses. They do not realize that My imperishable and supreme form is beyond the reach of the senses and cannot be grasped with the hands, the ears, the nose, the eyes. Thus the ignorant do not recognize Me though I am the creator of all things. This is my *yogamaya* (creative power). Pleasure and pain are the necessary consequence of likes and dislikes and keep mankind under the influence of delusion. But those who have freed themselves from delusion and purified their thoughts and actions hold firmly to their vows and offer Me constant worship. They know Me in the form of perfect Brahma (the Absolute) as well as of individual selfs embodied as various kinds of creatures (*adhyatma*), and My creative action (*karma*). Those who thus know Me as the One who governs the material (*adhibhuta*) and the divine (*adhidaiva*) aspects and the sacrifices (*adhyaajna*) and have attained evenness of temper are released from the bondage of birth and death after they have died. For having acquired the knowledge of reality their mind ceases to dwell on trivialities and seeing the whole universe to be filled with the spirit of God, they are absorbed in Him.

## CHAPTER VIII

Arjuna asked, 'You spoke of *Brahma* (the Absolute), *adhyatma*, *karma*, *adhibhuta*, *adhidaiva* and *adhiyajna*, but I do not understand the meaning of all these words. Again you say that at the hour of death you are revealed to those who know you as *adhibhuta* etc. and have attained evenness of temper. Please explain all this to me'

The Lord replied, '*Brahma* is the imperishable Supreme aspect of God, and *adhyatma* is the individual soul living in the body of all beings as the doer and the enjoyer. Karma is the process through which all beings come into existence, or in other words, the process of creation. *Adhibhuta* is Myself as the perishable body, and *adhiyajna* is the individual soul purified through sacrifice. Thus whether as the body or as the foolish soul or as the purified soul or as *Brahma*, it is I who am everywhere. And never doubt this that he who meditates on Me in all these aspects at the hour of death, forgets himself, is careful of nothing and desirous of nothing will be united with Me. Whatever a man constantly dwells on in his mind and remembers at the time of death is realized by him. Therefore at all times you should remember Me and set your mind and heart upon Me and you will surely come to Me. You may say that it is hard thus to stabilize the mind. But you take it from Me that one can become single-minded by daily



life is as only a moment in the infinite cycle of time. It is up to us therefore to think of God alone to the exclusion of all else. How can we afford to run after momentary pleasures? Creation and dissolution have gone on unceasingly during Brahma's day and night and will do so in future too.

'Brahma who creates and dissolves beings is only an aspect of Me. He is the unmanifested which cannot be perceived by the senses. Beyond this unmanifested there is yet another unmanifested aspect of Mine of which I have spoken to you. He who reaches it is not reborn, for there is no day or night so far as this is concerned. This is a calm and immovable aspect, which can be realized only by single-minded devotion. It supports and pervades the whole universe.

'It is said that one who dies in the bright half of the month during Uttarayana (the northward movement of the sun from January to July) comes to Me if he is mindful of Me at last, and that he who dies in the dark half of the month during Dakshinayana (the southward movement from July to January) is reborn into the world. Uttarayana and the bright fortnight here may be interpreted to mean the path of selfless service; and Dakshinayana and the dark half of month mean selfishness. The path of service is the path of wisdom, and the path of selfishness is the path of ignorance. He who treads the path of wisdom is released from the bondage of birth and death while he who takes the path of ignorance becomes a bond-slave. After having realized the

difference between the two, who would be so foolish as to prefer to walk in the way of ignorance? All men should learn to discriminate between the paths, renounce all fruits of merit, act in a spirit of detachment and discharge their duty with all their heart and soul, and thus endeavour to reach the supreme state described by Me'

## CHAPTER IX

Having described the lofty state of a yogi in the last verse of the preceding chapter, the Lord now naturally proceeds to sing the glory of *bhakti* (devotion) For the yogi in terms of the Gita is neither a dry-as-dust man of knowledge, nor a devotee carried away by his own enthusiasm, but a selfless performer of action imbued with the spirit of wisdom as well as devotion So the Lord said, 'As you are free from hatred, I shall now tell you the secret of wisdom, a knowledge of which will contribute to your welfare. This is the holy knowledge above all other and is easy to translate into action Those who have no faith in it fail to find Me Men cannot perceive My unmanifested form by their senses, yet it pervades the universe It supports the universe, the universe does not support it Again in a sense it may be said that all these beings are not in Me, and I am not in them Although I am the source of all beings and their sustainer, they are not in Me and I am not in them, for in ignorance they do not know Me and are not



devoted to Me. Know this to be my divine mystery.

‘But though it seems as if I am not in these beings, I am like the air moving everywhere. All creatures pass into My nature at the end of a cycle and are reborn at the beginning of creation. These acts are Mine, but they do not bind Me, for I act in a spirit of detachment and am indifferent as to the fruit they bear. These events happen as such is My nature. But people do not recognize Me in such a guise and deny My existence altogether. They entertain vain aspirations, perform vain actions and are full of ignorance, so that they can be said to partake of the nature of demons. But those who abide in the divine nature know and worship Me as the imperishable creator. They are firm in their determination. They are always striving for virtue, praising Me, and meditating on Me. Others again believe Me to be one or to be many. There are countless attributes of Me, therefore those who believe Me to be many think of different attributes as so many different faces of Mine. But one and all, they are My devotees.

‘I am the intention to offer a sacrifice, I the sacrifice itself, I the offering made to the spirits of the fathers, I the herb, I the sacred verse (*mantra*), I the oblation, I the fire to which it is offered. I am the father of this world, I the mother, the supporter and the grandsire, the object of knowledge, the syllable Om. \*Rigveda, \*Samaveda and \*Yajurveda. I

\* The three oldest sacred books of the Hindus (*trayi*)

am the end of the pilgrim's path, the sustainer, the lord, the witness I am the shelter, the lover, the origin, the dissolution, heat and cold, being and non-being Those who perform the rites mentioned in the Vedas do so in order to gain their fruit They may thus attain the world of heaven, but they have to return to the world of mortals and to die But if a man meditates upon Me with an undistracted mind and worships Me alone, I bear all his burdens, supply all his needs and protect his possessions Some others who worship other deities with faith in their hearts are victims of ignorance, but they are really worshipping Me for I am the lord of all sacrifices However they do not know Me in My comprehensive nature and therefore are unable to reach the supreme state Worshippers of the gods go to the world of the gods, the ancestor worshippers to the world of the fathers and those who worship the spirits go to the spirits, while those who worship Me with the right approach come to Me I accept the offering of love made by seekers, even if it be only a leaf or a flower Therefore whatever you do, do it only as an offering to Me, so that your responsibility for the good and evil results will cease altogether As you will have renounced all the fruits of action, there will be no more births and deaths for you I am the same to all beings, none is hateful or dear to Me But those who worship Me with devotion are in Me, and I am in them This is not partiality but only the natural consequence of their 'devotion

Devotion indeed works wonders. He who worships Me in utter devotion becomes a saint even if he has been a sinner. As darkness vanishes before the sun, a man abandons his evil ways as soon as he comes to Me. Therefore know for certain that My devotee shall not perish. He becomes a man of religion and enters into My peace. Those who are born in the so-called lower castes and illiterate women, \*vai-shyas and ^.hudras who take refuge in Me come to Me. It goes without saying, that so do Brahmins and Kshatriyas who lead a holy life. Every devotee enjoys the fruit of his devotion. Therefore you who have been born in this unsubstantial world should worship Me and work out your salvation. Fix your mind on Me, be devoted to Me, offer your sacrifices for My sake, prostrate yourself before Me. And if you are intent on Me and reduce yourself to zero by attuning yourself to Me, you are sure to come to Me.'

Note We learn from this chapter that devotion (*bhakti*) means attachment (*asakti*) to God. This is the royal road to the cultivation of a selfless spirit. Therefore we are told at the very beginning that devotion is the sovereign yoga and is easy to practise. It is easy to practise if it takes hold of our heart, but hard going if it does not. Hence it has been described as

\* The third and the fourth classes of ancient Hindu society, meaning, 'farmers and merchants' and 'servants' respectively. Brahmins (priests) and Kshatriyas (soldiers) constitute the first and the second classes

something for which we have to offer our life itself as the price. But he who has plunged into it enjoys perfect bliss though it scares the mere spectator. Sudhanva was laughing as he lay in the boiling oil while the bystanders were seized with terror and anxiety. The 'untouchable' Nanda is said to have danced as he was tried by the ordeal of fire. We need not bother whether or not these are true stories. But the fact is that a man reaches such a state of calmness and imperturbability when he is absorbed in something or other. He forgets himself. But who would set his heart on anything except God? 'Do not prefer the bitter nimba to sugar-cane or the glowworm to the sun and the moon.' The ninth chapter thus shows that renunciation of the fruit of action is impossible without devotion (*bhakti*). Its last verse sums up the whole chapter and in a word means, 'Seeking nothing, give yourself utterly to Me.'

## CHAPTER X

The Lord said, 'Hear once more what I say with a view to the welfare of devotees. Even gods and great sages do not know my beginning, for the very simple reason that I am without beginning myself and am the origin of the universe including gods and sages. The wise man who knows Me to be unborn and without beginning is liberated from all sins, for when he realizes Me as such and himself as My child or as part and parcel of Me, he overcomes the human liability to sin. Ignorance of one's real nature is the root of sin.

'As all beings derive from Me, so do the various natures distributed to them, such as for instance forgiveness, truth, joy and sorrow, birth and death, fear and fearlessness. Those who know all these to be My glorious manifestations easily become even-minded, as they cease to be egotistic. Their heart is fixed on Me. They dedicate their all to Me. I am the only subject of their conversation. They glorify Me and live in happiness and contentment. To these loving worshippers always aware of Me I grant the power of understanding, by means of which they come to Me.'

Arjuna then praised the Lord, 'You are the supreme Brahma, the highest abode, and the Lord. You yourself say that sages worship you as the First of the Gods, the Birthless, the All-pervading. O Lord,

O Father, no one knows your real nature, it is known to you alone. Now please tell me your glorious manifestations, and explain to me how I may recognize you by meditation.'

The Lord replied, 'There is no end to My divine manifestations, but I shall name the chief of these only. I am the *atman* (soul) dwelling in the heart of all beings. I am in the beginning, the middle and the end of them all. Of the Adityas I am Vishnu. Among the lights I am the light-giving sun. Of the Maruts (wind-gods) I am Marichi. Among the stars I am the moon. Of the Vedas I am the Samaveda. Of the gods I am Indra. Of the sense-organs I am the mind. Of beings I am consciousness. Of the Rudras I am Shanibara (Shiva). Of the Yakshas and Rakshasas I am Kubera. Of the Dautyas (demons) I am Prahlada. Of beasts I am the lion. Of birds I am the eagle. Indeed I am even the gambling of the cheats. Whatever, good or evil, happens in this world happens only by My permission. Realizing this men should give up their pride and steer clear of evil, for I am the dispenser of the fruits of their good and bad deeds. You should realize that only a single fraction of Mine sustains the entire universe.'

## CHAPTER XI

Arjuna, asking the Lord for a favour, said, 'O Supreme Lord, by teaching me the truth about the soul, you have dispelled my ignorance. You are All, the Creator and the Destroyer, being Imperishable yourself. If possible, please let me have a vision of your divine Form.'

The Lord said, 'There are thousands of my divine forms in various colours. The \*Adityas, the \*Vasus and the \*Rudras—all are unified in My body, as well as all things, animate and inanimate. But you cannot see this my form with those fleshly eyes. Therefore I give you divine sight with which to see Me.'

Sanjaya said to Dhritarashtra, 'O king, speaking thus to Arjuna, the Lord revealed to him His marvellous form which defies description. We see a single sun in the sky every day, but supposing a thousand suns were blazing in the sky, the glory of what Arjuna saw was more dazzling than their accumulated light. The ornaments and the weapons of that Form were similarly divine. Arjuna's hair then stood erect. And he spoke, shaking all over.

Arjuna said, 'O God, I see every thing and everybody within your body. Brahma and Shiva are there, and so are the sages and the holy serpents. I see you with countless arms and faces, and find no beginning, middle or end. You shine like a mass of insufferable

\* Various classes of Hindu gods. *Trans*

light, and blaze like fire You are the ultimate foundation of the universe, the Ancient of Days, and the guardian of eternal law Wherever I look, I see parts of your body The sun and the moon are your eyes as it were You pervade heaven and earth Your splendour burns up the universe This world is seized with awe. The gods, the sages, and the siddhas — all are standing with clasped hands and sing your praise On seeing this stupendous form and brilliance I lose my nerve My patience and peace are gone O God, have mercy on me I see these people rush into your mouth frightful with tusks as moths fly into a flame and you crush them to powder Who are you with such an awful form? I cannot understand your ways'

The Lord said, 'I am Time, the destroyer of worlds You may or may not fight, but the warriors on both the sides are bound to perish You are only an instrument of the divine will'

Arjuna said, 'O God, home of all the world, you are the Imperishable, being and non-being and what is beyond either of them You are the First of the gods, the Ancient of Days, you are the refuge of the world You are the one thing which is to be known You are Vayu (wind), Yama (the God of death and judgment), Agni (fire) and Prajapati (the Creator) Hail to you a thousand times Now please show me your original form again'

The Lord then said, 'I showed My world-wide form to you, because I love you You have seen today



something the vision of which cannot be won by Vedic or any other studies, rituals, alms or austerities. Do not be bewildered because you have seen it. Cast away fear, be calm and see My familiar form That shape of mine which you have seen is hard to see even for the gods and can be seen only by pure devotion. Whoever works for Me, makes Me his supreme good, becomes My devotee, frees himself from attachment and loves all beings, comes to Me.'

I have deliberately cut this as well as the last chapter short. This one is full of poetry and therefore should be read frequently either in the original or in translation, so that we may be imbued with the spirit of devotion. Whether we are or not thus imbued can be found by applying the acid test mentioned in the last verse. Devotion is impossible in the absence of total self-surrender and all-embracing love. Self-surrender and a sense of solidarity with all living beings become easy of attainment if we meditate on God as world-destroying time into whose gaping mouths the universe rushes to its doom. This fate is bound to overtake us too all of a sudden, whether we wish for it or not. Thus all distinctions of small and big, high and low, man and woman, men and the lower animals disappear. Seeing that we are all a mere morsel in the mouth of God as the Destroyer, we should become humble and reduce ourselves to zero and cultivate friendship with every one else. If we do this, we shall cease to be afraid of this terrible Form of God. On the other hand it will give us peace of mind.

## CHAPTER XIII

The Lord said: 'Kshetra (the Field) is another name for the human body and Kshetrajna means one who knows the Field Understand Me as the Knower of the Field in all bodies Real knowledge means discrimination between the Field and the knower of the Field The five great elements, namely, earth, water, fire, air and ether, individuality (*ahamkara*), intellect, the unmanifest, the ten senses,\* mind, the five sense objects, desire and hatred, pleasure and pain, *sanghata* (the power of combination inherent in the constituents of the body), consciousness and cohesion, — these constitute the Field with its modifications Knowledge of these is essential, as they have to be renounced Wisdom is the foundation on which such renunciation can be based Wisdom here means and includes humility, unpretentiousness, non-violence, forgiveness, rectitude, service of the teacher, purity, steadfastness, self-restraint, indifference to sense objects, absence of egoism, insight into the evil of birth, death, old age, disease and pain, detachment from wife and children, hearth and home, friends and relations, equimindedness to good and bad fortune, whole-hearted devotion to God, love of solitude, dislike for the enjoyment of sensual pleasures in company with

\*The five organs of perception, viz hearing, touch, sight, taste and smell, and the five organs of action, viz, tongue, feet, hands and the organs of evacuation and reproduction.

others, thirst for knowledge of the soul, and at last the beatific vision; And the reverse of this is ignorance. Now let me tell you something about that which has to be known with a view to salvation That is beginningless supreme Brahma Brahma is beginningless because it is unborn and was there when there was nothing. It is neither *sat* (existent) nor *asat* (non-existent) but beyond them both. But from another standpoint it can be called *sat*, because it is eternal Human beings cannot recognize it as such; therefore it is said to be beyond even *sat* It pervades the whole universe. It may be said to have a thousand hands and feet, and though it seems to have hands and feet, it is devoid of the organs of sense for it does not need these organs. Sense organs are transitory while Brahma is eternal. And although being all-pervasive and all-sustaining, it may be said to be enjoying the qualities (*gunas*), it is free from them Where there are *gunas*, there is change (*vikara*), but Brahma is changeless. It may be said to be outside all beings, because it is out for those who do not know it. And it is within all beings as it is all-pervading Similarly it is both moving and unmoving It is subtle and hence imperceptible It is distant as well as near It is undivided in the sense that it is imperishable though name (*nama*) and form (*rupa*) perish, but it also seems to be divided as we say that it is within all creatures It creates, preserves and destroys It is the light of lights beyond darkness, and the end of all knowledge. Brahma which is planted in every heart is *jneya*, the one thing

worth knowing All knowledge is a means to the end of being united with it

‘God and His *maya* (nature) are both without beginning. Modifications (*vikaras*) are born of *maya* and these give rise to various kinds of action (*karma*). On account of *maya*, the soul experiences pleasure and pain and the fruit of merit (*punya*) and demerit (*papa*). He who, having realized this, does his duty in a spirit of detachment is not born again in spite of his activity, for he beholds the face of God in all faces, and seeing that not a leaf moves but by the divine will, he is free from egotism, understands that he is separate from the body and that the soul, though living in the body, remains by means of knowledge unaffected like the omnipresent ether’

## CHAPTER XIV

The Lord said, ‘Once more I will teach you that supreme wisdom which enabled sages to reach the highest perfection. People who find that wisdom and do their duty accordingly are delivered from the cycle of births and deaths O Arjuna, know Me to be the father and mother of all beings The three *gunas* born of nature, viz, *sattva* (goodness), *rajas* (passion) and *tamas* (ignorance) bind the soul down They may be described respectively as the highest, the middling and the lowest Of these *sattva* is pure and unsullied and gives light, it is therefore the source of happiness. *Rajas* arises from attachment and craving and makes a man indulge in all manner of activities *Tamas* is

rooted in ignorance and delusion and makes one negligent and indolent. In short *sattva* makes for happiness, *rajas* for restlessness and *tamas* for sloth. Sometimes *sattva* prevails, overpowering *rajas* and *tamas*; at other times *rajas* prevails, overpowering *sattva* and *tamas*; at still other times *tamas* prevails, overpowering *sattva* and *rajas*. When the light of wisdom shines through all the activities of the body it may be known that *sattva* is increasing. Where greed, bustle, unrest and competition are observed, *rajas* is the ruler. And the predominance of *tamas* is characterized by ignorance, sloth and delusion. If *sattva* prevails in a man's life, he is born in the sinless worlds of the great sages after death. If *rajas* dominates his life, he is born among those who are attached to action. And if *tamas* is the ruling principle, he returns to the womb of the senseless. The fruit of *sattvika* action is purity, while the fruit of *rajas* is pain and the fruit of *tamas* is ignorance. A *sattvika* man rises to the higher regions, a *rajasa* person remains in this world, while a *tamasa* individual sinks to the underworld. When a man perceives no doer of action other than these qualities and knows 'Me who am beyond them' he enters into My nature. When the dweller in the body has overcome the three qualities from which all bodies arise, he is freed from birth and death, old age and pain and drinks the nectar of eternal life.'

On hearing that one who transcends the qualities makes such great progress on the pilgrim's path, Arjuna asked, 'What are the marks of such perfection? How

does such a perfect being conduct himself? And how does he cross over the qualities?’

The Lord replied, ‘A man is said to have risen above the qualities when he is not angry if the light and knowledge of *sattva* or the activity and bustle of *rajas* or the delusion and ignorance of *tamas* are there and is not wishful if they are not. He sits like one who is unconcerned and is not disturbed by the qualities. He stands apart unmoved, being aware that they are the doers of all actions. He is even-minded to pleasure and pain as well as to a lump of earth, a stone and gold. The pleasant and the unpleasant are alike to him. He is unaffected by either praise or blame. He is the same in honour and evil fame. He is alike to friend and foe. And he has abandoned all undertakings.

‘Do not think that this is a goal you can never reach and that therefore you need not exert yourself. What I have described is the state of a perfect man. The way to it is to serve Me with single-minded devotion. From the third chapter onwards I have pointed out that a man cannot so much as even breathe without action (*karma*), from which no human being can ever hope to escape. He who would transcend the qualities should dedicate all his actions to Me, and cease to desire their fruits. If he does this, his actions will not be an impediment to his progress, for I am Brahma, immortal life, the eternal law and joy for ever.

‘When a man reduces himself to zero, he sees Me alone everywhere. He is *guna-atita* (one who has crossed over the qualities).’

## CHAPTER XV

The Lord said, 'This world is like an *ashvattha* (sacred fig) tree with roots above and branches below and with the Vedic hymns as its leaves. And he who knows it knows the Vedas. The branches of this cosmic tree nourished by the qualities 'shoot to heaven and sink to earth' (Sir Edwin Arnold). Sense objects are its sprouts. It is these things of the senses which bind the soul with the bonds of *karma* in the world of men.

'The real nature of this tree cannot be known here, nor its beginning, nor end, nor foundation.

'This strongly rooted cosmic tree should be cut down with the weapon of non-co-operation, so that the soul may rise to a higher world from which there is no return to the world of mortals. With this end in view a man should engage himself in the constant worship of the Ancient of Days, from whom all this activity (the cosmic process) seems to flow. The wise man who is free from pride and delusion, victorious over the vice of attachment and devoted to the Supreme Soul, who is free from cravings and to whom pleasure and pain are alike, — that wise man reaches the state which is beyond all change, and which does not need to be illumined by the sun, the moon or fire. That is My supreme abode.

'An eternal part of Myself transformed into the individual soul in this world draws to itself the sense,

including the mind which reside in matter. When the soul enters the body or leaves it, it takes these senses with it even as the wind carries fragrance from its places. It enjoys sense objects with the help of the ear, the eye, the senses of touch and taste, the nose and the mind. The ignorant cannot recognize it as it goes or stays or enjoys itself under the influence of the qualities, but the sages see it with the eye of wisdom. Striving yogis see it living in their own bodies, but those who have not achieved evenness of temper cannot see it even if they try.

‘The light of the sun that illumines all the world, that which is in the moon and in fire, — know that all that light is Mine. Permeating the soil I sustain all living beings. I become the sap-producing moon and feed the plants. Becoming the fire of life in the bodies of all living creatures and being united with the life-breaths, I digest the four kinds of food. I abide in all hearts. From Me are memory and wisdom as well as their absence. I am that which is to be known by all the Vedas. So also I am the author of Vedanta and the knower of the Vedas.

‘There may be said to be two kinds of personalities in this world, namely *kshara* (the perishable) and *a-kshara* (the imperishable). The perishable is all beings, and the imperishable is I who inspire them, and am the same for ever. But beyond either is the highest spirit who is called the Supreme Soul, and who, pervading all, sustains the three worlds. This too is I. I therefore transcend the perishable and



even the imperishable, and am known in the world as well as in the Vedas as the supreme reality. The wise man who recognizes Me as such knows all that need be known, and serves Me with his whole being.

‘ O sinless Arjuna, I have told you this most secret teaching. By knowing this a man becomes truly wise and reaches the shores of salvation. ’

## CHAPTER XVI

The Lord said, ‘ I will now point out the distinction between the divine and the demoniacal natures. Among the signs of the divine are fearlessness, purity of heart, wisdom, evenness of temper, self-control, almsgiving, sacrifice, study of the scriptures, austerity, straightforwardness, non-violence, truth, freedom from anger, renunciation, peacefulness, not speaking evil of others, compassion to all living beings, absence of greed, gentleness, modesty, absence of fickleness, vigour, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, internal as well as external, freedom from malice and pride.

‘ Among the signs of the demoniacal are hypocrisy, arrogance, conceit, anger, cruelty and ignorance.

‘ The divine nature leads to liberation while the demoniacal leads to bondage. O Arjuna, you are born with the endowments of the divine nature.

‘ I will say something more about the demoniacal nature, so that people may easily give it up. Men of such a nature do not know what to do and what to refrain from doing. There is no purity or truth in them,

so that they do not observe the rules of good conduct.

‘ They hold that the world is unreal, without basis or ruler For them sex is all the world so that they think of nothing except enjoyment of the objects of sense

‘ They do horrible deeds They are dull-witted. They hold fast to their wicked thoughts and all their activity is directed only to the destruction of the world. Their desires are insatiable They are full of hypocrisy, pride and arrogance They are thus plagued by innumerable cares. They want fresh sensual pleasures every day They are “ensnared in nooses of a hundred idle hopes” (Arnold), and by unlawful means amass wealth in order to gratify their desires.

“ I got this today, I will get that tomorrow. I killed this one enemy today, I will also kill others. I am a man of might. I have great possessions Who is my equal ? With a view to fame I will sacrifice to the gods, give alms and make merry ” They say this to themselves with a chuckle, and being caught in the net of delusion, go to hell at last.

‘ Men with such a nature, given over to pride, speak ill of others and thus hate God who dwells in all hearts. They are therefore frequently born in the wombs of degraded parents

‘ There are three gates to hell, leading to the ruin of the soul . lust, anger and greed. Therefore we should renounce them all. Turning aside from them, men go by the strait and narrow path and reach the highest state.

‘He who disregards the scriptures composed of eternal principles and gives himself up to pleasure cannot attain happiness or peace characteristic of the right way.

‘Therefore in deciding what you must do and what you must not do, you should acquire the knowledge of fundamental and immutable principles from wise men and think and act accordingly.’

## CHAPTER XVII

Arjuna asked, “What happens to those who serve in faith, neglecting the prevailing code of conduct?”

The Lord replied, “There are three kinds of faith, characterized by *sattva*, *rajas* or *tamas* as the case may be. As is a man’s faith, so is he.

‘*Sattvika* men worship the gods, *rajasa* men worship demigods and demons; and *tamasa* men worship the spirits of the dead.

‘The nature of a man’s faith cannot be ascertained offhand. In order to assess it correctly one must know the precise nature of his food, austerity, sacrifice and alms-giving.

‘Foods which make for long life and increase the vital force, energy, strength and health are said to be *sattvika*. *Rajasa* foods are violently bitter, sour, hot or pungent and give rise to disease and aches and pains. And cooked food which is stale or gives out a bad smell and the leavings of others are said to be *tamasa*.

‘The sacrifice which is offered as a matter of duty without expecting a reward and with mental concentration is said to be *sattvika*. A *rajasa* sacrifice is that in which a reward is desired and which is offered for outward show. And a *tamasa* sacrifice is one in which scriptural rules are disobeyed, no eatables or alms are given away and no hymns are chanted.

‘Honouring the saintly, purity, brahmacharya and non-violence constitute austerity of the body. Truthful, pleasant and beneficial speech as well as a study of the scriptures is austerity of the speech. And cheerfulness, gentleness, silence, self-control and purity of motive — these are called the austerity of the mind. Such austerity of the mind, body and speech as is practised without desire of fruit by men with an evenness of temper is said to be *sattvika*. Austerity practised for ostentation and with a view to gaining honour is said to be *rajasa*. And austerity done by obstinate fools with self-torture or with the object of hurting others is said to be *tamasa*.

‘A gift “made in due place, due time and to a fit recipient” without expecting a reward and with a feeling that it is right for a man to give is said to be *sattvika*. A gift made grudgingly with a view to getting something in return is regarded as *rajasa*. And the gift which is given in a contemptuous spirit, and without honour done to the recipient and without considering the proper time and place for it is said to be *tamasa*.

‘Brahma is designated in the Vedas as *Om tat sat*.

Therefore men of faith pronounce the sacred syllable *Om* when they commence any rite of sacrifice, alms-giving or austerity. This single syllable stands for Brahma. *Tat* means *that*. And *sat* means *satya*, beneficent. That is to say, God is one, He alone is, He alone is truth and the benefactor of the world. He who offers a sacrifice, makes gifts or practises austerity with a realization of this truth and in a spirit of dedication is a man of *sattvika* faith. And he is free from blame if he knowingly or unknowingly does something different from the correct procedure in the spirit of dedication. But acts undertaken in the absence of such a spirit are said to be performed without faith and therefore are *asat* (unreal). ’

## CHAPTER XVIII

Even after he had pondered over the teaching in all the previous chapters, there was still a doubt in Arjuna’s mind. So he said, ‘ The *sannyasa* of the Gita seems to be different from renunciation as currently understood. Are *sannyasa* and *tyaga* really different? ’

While resolving Arjuna’s doubt in answer to this question, the Lord summarized the Gita doctrine in a concise manner : ‘ Some actions are motivated by desire. Various activities are indulged in by men with a view to fulfil various desires. These are called *lamya* actions. Then again there are certain necessary and natural actions such as breathing, eating, drinking, lying down, sitting, etc., with a view to keep the body

a fit instrument of service And thirdly there are actions done with a view to serve others Giving up *kamya* actions is *Sannyasa*, and renunciation of fruits of all actions is *tyaga* as recommended to you all along

‘Some people maintain that there is evil, no matter how little, in all actions whatever Even so, a man must not give up actions done with a view to *yajna* (sacrifice), that is to say, the service of others. Alms-giving and austerity are included in *yajna* But even while serving others, a man should act in a spirit of detachment. Otherwise his activity is likely to be mixed up with evil

‘Renunciation owing to ignorance of duties that must be done is said to be inspired by *tamas* Giving up any action merely because it involves physical suffering is said to be *rajasa* But service rendered to others because of a feeling that it must be done and without the desire for the fruits is real *sattvika tyaga*. In this *tyaga* therefore there is no giving up of all actions, but only of the fruit of duties that must be done, and of course of other, that is, *kamya* actions When a wise man acts in such a selfless spirit, all his doubts are dispelled, his motives are pure and he has no thought of personal comfort and discomfort

‘He who does not abandon the fruits of action must enjoy or put up with the natural consequences of his own acts, and is thus a bond-slave for ever But he who gives up the fruits of action achieves freedom.

‘And why should a man feel attachment for  
B W.-21

action? It is idle for anybody to imagine that he himself is a doer. There are five causes for the accomplishment of all actions, namely, this body, the doer, the various instruments, efforts, and last but by no means the least, providence.

‘Realizing this, a man should give up pride. He who does something without egoism may be said to be not doing it in spite of his doing it, for he is not bound by his action. Of a humble man who has reduced himself to zero it may be said that he does not kill though he kills. This does not mean that the man in spite of his humility may kill, and yet be unaffected by the killing. For no occasion can arise for such a man to indulge in violence.

‘There are three things that inspire action : knowledge, the object of knowledge and the knower. And there are three constituents of action - the organ, the deed and the doer. The thing to be done is the object of knowledge, the method of doing it is knowledge and he who knows it is the knower. After he has thus received an impulse to action, he performs an action in which the senses serve as instruments. Thought is thus translated into action.

“That by which a man is able

To see one changeless Life in all the lives”  
(Edvin Arnold)

and to realize the essential unity that underlies all diversities is *sattvika* knowledge. In *rajasa* knowledge one holds that there are different souls in different creatures, while in *tamasa* knowledge a man does not

know a thing and imagines that everything is mixed up without rhyme and reason.

‘ Similarly there are three kinds of action Action in which there are no likes and dislikes and no desire for personal gains is *sattvika* That in which there are a desire for enjoyment, egoism and restlessness is *rajasa* action And *tamasa* action is one in which no thought at all is given to personal capacity and consequential injury or violence and which is undertaken through delusion.

‘ So also there are three classes of doers A *sattvika* doer is free from attachment and egoism and yet firm and enterprising and is neither elated by success nor worried by failure A *rajasa* doer is impassioned, greedy and violent, “ slave by turns of sorrow and of joy ” (Edwin Arnold) and of course desires to obtain the fruit of his actions And a *tamasa* doer is unsystematic, procrastinating, obstinate, malicious and indolent, in short, without an iota of self-culture

‘ Intellect, firmness and happiness also are said to be of three kinds

‘ The *sattvika* intellect is able properly to distinguish between action and non-action,

“ What must be done, and what must not be done,  
What should be feared, and what should not be  
feared,

What binds and what emancipates the soul ”  
(Edwin Arnold)

The *rajasa* intellect tries to draw these distinctions but generally fails to do so correctly, while the *tamasa*



intellect "looks upon wrong as right and sees all things contrariwise of truth" (Edwin Arnold).

'Firmness is the power of taking up some thing and sticking to it through thick and thin. It is more or less inherent in all things; otherwise the world could not subsist for a single moment. Firmness is *sattvika* when there is a constantly maintained balance between the activities of the mind, the vital airs (*pranas*) and the senses. The firmness by which a man holds fast to duty, pleasure and wealth from attachment and with a view to personal advantage is *rajasa*. And firmness is *tamasa*, "wherewith the fool

Cleaves to his sloth, his sorrow and his fears,  
His vanity and despair." (Edwin Arnold)

'*Sattvika* happiness is the "pleasure that endures,  
Banishing pain for aye, bitter at first  
As poison to the soul, but afterwards  
Sweet as the taste of Amrit."

(Edwin Arnold)

It arises from true self-knowledge.

'*Rajasa* happiness arises from sensual enjoyment.  
" . . . Sweet

As Amrit is its first taste, but its last  
Bitter as poison." (Edwin Arnold)

'And *tamasa* happiness is that

" . . . which springs

From sloth and sleep and foolishness "

(Edwin Arnold)

'This threefold classification is thus applicable to all things. The duties of the four *varnas* (classes in

ancient Hindu society) are fixed by reason of the dominance or recession of the qualities planted in each

‘A Brahman’s conduct is characterized by calmness, self-discipline, austerity, purity, forgiveness, uprightness, wisdom, experience and faith in God. The characteristics of a Kshatriya are valour, splendour, firmness, resourcefulness, not flying from battle, open-handedness and leadership. A Vaishya’s task is “to till the ground, tend cattle, venture trade” (Edwin Arnold), and service is the Shudra’s work. This is not to say that a member of any one of these classes may not be endowed with qualities characteristic of other classes or is not entitled to cultivate them in himself. But qualities and work as mentioned above serve as signs for the recognition of a man’s *varna*. If the qualities and tasks of each caste are recognized, there is no undesirable competition or feeling of hatred among them. There is no question here of high and low. But if each does his duty selflessly according to his nature, he will reach perfection. Therefore one’s own duty, though it appears to be valueless, is better than the duty of another which seems to be easy. A man may remain free from sin when he performs the task naturally allotted to him, as he is then free from selfish desires, the very wish to do something else arises from selfishness. For the rest, all actions are clouded by defects as fire by smoke. But the natural duty is done without desire for its fruit, and thus loses its binding force.

‘The calm yogi who has been sanctified by thus

performing his own duty, who has his mind under control, who has given up the five sense objects, who has overcome likes and dislikes, who lives in solitude, i.e., whose eyes are turned inward, who achieves mastery of his mind, body and speech by abstemiousness, who is ever conscious of the living presence of God, and who has given up pride, desire, anger, acquisitiveness and the like — that yogi is fit to be united with Brahma. He is equiminded towards all men. He neither rejoices nor indulges in grief. Such a devotee has true knowledge of God and is absorbed in Him. Thus taking refuge in Me, he gains the eternal place.

‘Therefore dedicate your all to Me, regard Me as the supreme object of your love, and with discrimination, fix your mind on Me. As you do this, you will overcome all difficulties. But if out of egoism you do not listen to Me, you will perish. The one thing needful is that abandoning all conflicting views, you should come to Me alone for shelter, and thus be freed from sin.

‘Do not tell this truth to anyone who is not a devotee, austere in life, and hating Me, does not wish to listen. But one who communicates this great secret to My devotees will surely come to Me in virtue of his devotion.’

After having thus reported to Dhritarashtra the dialogue between Arjuna and Krishna, Sanjaya said,

‘Where there is Krishna, the prince of yoga, and Arjuna with his bow and arrows, there are prosperity,

victory, happiness and fundamental morality '

Krishna to whom the epithet 'prince of yoga ' has here been applied means pure knowledge based on spiritual experience, and by referring to Arjuna as an archer it is suggested that where there is action in accordance with such knowledge, the doer obtains every wish that is not contrary to lofty morals

## TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

### CHAPTER XII

'Whenever I meet any one who knows the Gita by heart, he or she commands my respect. I would, however, like the reciters to realize that the mere recitation is not an end in itself. It should be an aid to the contemplation and assimilation of the meaning and the message of the Gita. By patience even a parrot can be taught to recite it by heart. But he would be no wiser for the recitation. The reciter of the Gita should be what its author expects him to be — a yogi in its broad sense. It demands from its votaries balance in every thought, word and deed and a perfect correspondence between the three. He whose speech and action do not accord with his thoughts is a humbug or a hypocrite' (M. K. Gandhi *Hindu Dharma*, Navajivan, 1950, pp. 170-1)

'Devotion is not mere lip-worship, it is a wrestling with death

'[It] is no soft-hearted effusiveness. It certainly is not blind faith. [It] has the least to do with externals. A devotee may use, if he likes, rosaries and forehead marks or make offerings, but these things are no test of his devotion

'The popular notion of [devotion] is soft-heartedness, telling beads and the like and disdaining to do even a loving service lest the telling of beads might be interrupted. This [devotee] therefore leaves the rosary only for eating, drinking and the like, never for grinding corn or nursing patients

'But the Gita says, "no one has attained his goal without action" ' (ibid, pp. 160-1, paragraphs 9, 10, 13)

In Vrindavan Shri Krishna Prem saw a *vaishnava* dying of typhoid. All round, coming and going were *vaishnavas* with rosaries in their hands, but there was no one to give him even a glass of

water 'What can be the value of such worship as this?' he asked See his *The Search for Truth*, p 26

## CHAPTER I

'I regard Duryodhana and his party as the baser impulses in man, and Arjuna and his party as the higher impulses The field of battle is our own body An eternal battle is going on between the two camps Krishna is the Dweller within, ever whispering in a pure heart Like the watch the heart needs the winding of purity, or else the Dweller ceases to speak' (ibid , p 156)

## CHAPTER II

'English friends made me read the Gita They placed before me Sir Edwin Arnold's magnificent rendering of the Gita I devoured the contents from cover to cover and was entranced by it The last nineteen verses of the second chapter have since been inscribed on the tablet of my heart They contain for me all knowledge The truths they preach are the "eternal verities"'

'Those verses are the key to the interpretation of the Gita' (ibid , p 152)

'The Message of the Gita is to be found in the second chapter where Krishna speaks of the balanced state of mind, of mental equipoise In nineteen verses at the close he explains how this state can be achieved It can be achieved, he tells us, after killing all your passions It is not possible to kill your brother after having killed all your passions' (ibid , p 179)

'I have endeavoured to show that its message consists in the performance of one's duty with detachment The theme of the Gita is contained in the second chapter and the way to carry out the message is to be found in the third chapter This is not to say that the other chapters have less merit Indeed every one of them has a merit of its own

'I hope that those who take part in the celebration [of Gita-jayanti] will approach it in the proper spirit and with a

fixed intention to live up to the message of the noble song' (ibid, p 182)

A fittingly anonymous article in *The Times* of November 17, 1956 will serve as a fine commentary on the Gita doctrine

'In the collect for tomorrow (the twenty-fifth Sunday after Trinity) prayer is offered that those who "bring forth the fruit of good works" may be "rewarded by God" There seems to be a conflict between morality and religion at this point For while the former is emphatic that good actions must be done without the thought of reward and makes its motto "duty for duty's sake", the latter insists that God makes a distinction between good and evil, so that one meets with his approval while the other is condemned, and uses to express this the common language of reward and punishment.

'Did not Jesus himself ask, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Yet his life is clear evidence that the only service of God he valued was one that is free from any taint of self-interest His fidelity was unshaken even when it became clear that it would lead him to abandonment by his friends and death at the hands of his enemies The cross is a reminder that devotion to God and love to man, if they are rewarded at all, must find their reward elsewhere than in popular approval or material advantage

'What then are the rewards of which the collect speaks? The answer is to be found in the words "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" The reward of service is not something attached to the service to make it worthwhile; it is of the same order as the service itself. Inner dedication to God leads to admission into his fellowship and deeper knowledge of his will the love of God makes possible an ever closer likeness to him The vision of God, the enrichment of one's whole being, the joy of co-operation with him in the enterprises of his Kingdom — these are the rewards that God bestows on his servants

'Yet that is not all While it is true that the primary rewards to the life of the spirit are in the realm of the spirit, it is also true

that character and uprightness may bring substantial advantages at a lower level. There have been cases in which public opinion has rallied to a leader just because he was known to be entirely honest and disinterested, giving him power and office that it would not entrust to a meaner person. To be scrupulously fair and absolutely reliable in business may bring advantages that do not fall to the lot of those who think only in terms of immediate profit.

'Not, of course, that action is to be for such gains. The maxim that "honesty is the best policy" is a dangerous one. He who chooses honesty for the returns it yields may be tempted to abandon it when circumstances arise in which it looks likely to be unprofitable. The paradox is that a virtue such as honesty leads to esteem and success when it is practised for its own sake, without any thought either of esteem or of success. Religion and morality are alike injured by any appeal to self-interest, the reward God gives is the vision of himself, and this is for those only who serve him without thought of what will be lost and what will be gained thereby.

'Perhaps this paradox that the rewards of God's service are for those only who serve him with no thought of reward lies behind the saying of Jesus that he who would save his life will lose it while he who is prepared to lose it will find that he has in fact preserved it. God receives into the choicest company of his servants those who follow truth and right simply because they are truth and right, and do not ask what the outcome of their fidelity will be. In the great words of Ignatius Loyola, they labour and do not ask for any reward save that of knowing that they do God's will.'



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CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME  
ITS MEANING AND PLACE



## FOREWORD

This is a thoroughly revised edition of the *Constructive Programme* which I first wrote in 1941. The items included in it have not been arranged in any order, certainly not in the order of their importance. When the reader discovers that a particular subject though important in itself in terms of Independence does not find place in the programme, he should know that the omission is not intentional. He should unhesitatingly add to my list and let me know. My list does not pretend to be exhaustive; it is merely illustrative. The reader will see several new and important additions.

Readers, whether workers and volunteers or not, should definitely realize that the constructive programme is the truthful and non-violent way of winning Poorna Swaraj. Its wholesale fulfilment is complete Independence. Imagine all the forty crores of people busying themselves with the whole of the constructive programme which is designed to build up the nation from the very bottom upward. Can anybody dispute the proposition that it must mean complete Independence in every sense of the expression, including the ousting of foreign domination? When the critics laugh at the proposition, what they mean is that forty crores of people will never co-operate in the effort to fulfil the programme. No doubt, there is considerable truth in the scoff. My answer is, it is still worth the attempt. Given an indomitable will on the part of a

band of earnest workers, the programme is as workable as any other and more so than most. Anyway, I have no substitute for it, if it is to be based on non-violence.

Civil Disobedience, mass or individual, is an aid to constructive effort and is a full substitute for armed revolt. Training is necessary as well for civil disobedience as for armed revolt. Only the ways are different. Action in either case takes place only when occasion demands. Training for military revolt means learning the use of arms ending perhaps in the atomic bomb. For civil disobedience it means the Constructive Programme.

Therefore, workers will never be on the look-out for civil resistance. They will hold themselves in readiness, if the constructive effort is sought to be defeated. From one or two illustrations it will be seen where it can be and, where it cannot be, offered. Political pacts we know have been and can be, but personal friendship with individuals cannot be, prevented. Such friendships, selfless and genuine, must be the basis for political pacts. Similarly, centralized *khadi* can be defeated by the Government, but no power can defeat individual manufacture and use of *khadi*. The manufacture and use of *khadi* must not be imposed upon the people, but it must be intelligently and willingly accepted by them as one of the items of the freedom movement. This can be done only from the villages as units. Pioneers even in such programmes can be obstructed. They have

had to go through the fire of suffering throughout the world. There is no Swaraj without suffering. In violence, truth is the first and the greatest sufferer; in non-violence it is ever triumphant. Moreover, men composing the Government are not to be regarded as enemies. To regard them as such will be contrary to the non-violent spirit. Part we must, but as friends.

If this preliminary observation has gone home to the reader, he will find the constructive programme to be full of deep interest. It should prove as absorbing as politics so-called and platform oratory, and certainly more important and useful.

Poona, 13-11-1945

M. K. GANDHI



## INTRODUCTORY

The constructive programme may otherwise and more fittingly be called construction of Poorna Swaraj or complete Independence by truthful and non-violent means

Effort for construction of Independence so called through violent and, therefore, necessarily untruthful means we know only too painfully. Look at the daily destruction of property, life and truth in the present war.

Complete Independence through truth and non-violence means the independence of every unit, be it the humblest of the nation, without distinction of race, colour or creed. This independence is never exclusive. It is, therefore, wholly compatible with interdependence within or without. Practice will always fall short of the theory, even as the drawn line falls short of the theoretical line of Euclid. Therefore, complete Independence will be complete only to the extent of our approach in practice to truth and non-violence.

Let the reader mentally plan out the whole of the constructive programme, and he will agree with me that, if it could be successfully worked out, the end of it would be the Independence we want. Has not Mr. Amery said that an agreement between the major parties, translated in my language, any agreement *after* communal unity which is only one item in the



constructive programme, will be respected? We need not question his sincerity, for, if such unity is honestly, i e , non-violently, attained, it will in itself contain the power to compel acceptance of the agreed demand.

On the other hand there is no such thing as an imaginary or even perfect definition of Independence through violence. For, it presupposes only ascendancy of that party of the nation which makes the most effective use of violence. In it perfect equality, economic or otherwise, is inconceivable.

But for my purpose, which is to convince the reader of the necessity of following out the constructive programme in the non-violent effort, the acceptance of my argument about the ineffectiveness of violence for the attainment of Independence is not required. The reader is welcome to the belief that Independence of the humblest unit is possible under a scheme of violence, if this effort enables him also to admit that it is a certainty through the complete execution of the programme by the nation.

Let us now examine the items.

### 1. COMMUNAL UNITY

Everybody is agreed about the necessity of this unity. But everybody does not know that unity does not mean political unity which may be imposed. It means an unbreakable heart unity. The first thing essential for achieving such unity is for every Congressman, whatever his religion may be, to represent in his own person Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Zoroastrian, Jew, etc., shortly, every Hindu and non-Hindu.

He has to feel his identity with every one of the millions of the inhabitants of Hindustan. In order to realize this, every Congressman will cultivate personal friendship with persons representing faiths other than his own. He should have the same regard for the other faiths as he has for his own.

In such a happy state of things there would be no disgraceful cry at the stations such as "Hindu water" and "Muslim water" or "Hindu tea" and "Muslim tea". There would be no separate rooms or pots for Hindus and non-Hindus in schools and colleges, no communal schools, colleges and hospitals. The beginning of such a revolution has to be made by Congressmen without any political motive behind the correct conduct. Political unity will be its natural fruit.

We have long been accustomed to think that power comes only through Legislative Assemblies. I have regarded this belief as a grave error brought about by inertia or hypnotism. A superficial study of British history has made us think that all power percolates to the people from parliaments. The truth is that power resides in the people and it is entrusted for the time being to those whom they may choose as their representatives. Parliaments have no power or even existence independently of the people. It has been my effort for the last twenty-one years to convince the people of this simple truth. Civil Disobedience is the storehouse of power. Imagine a whole people unwilling to conform to the laws of the legislature, and prepared to suffer the consequences of non-

compliance! They will bring the whole legislative and executive machinery to a standstill. The police and the military are of use to coerce minorities however powerful they may be. But no police or military coercion can bend the resolute will of a people who are out for suffering to the uttermost.

And parliamentary procedure is good only when its members are willing to conform to the will of the majority. In other words, it is fairly effective only among compatibles.

Here in India we have been pretending to work the parliamentary system under separate electorates which have created artificial incompatibles. Living unity can never come out of these artificial entities being brought together on a common platform. Such legislatures may function. But they can only be a platform for wrangling and sharing the crumbs of power that may fall from rulers whoever they may be. These rule with a rod of iron, and prevent the opposing elements from flying at one another's throats. I hold the emergence of complete Independence to be an impossibility out of such a disgrace.

Though I hold such strong views, I have come to the conclusion that so long as there are undesirable candidates for elective bodies, Congress should put up candidates in order to prevent reactionaries from entering such bodies.

## 2 REMOVAL OF UNTOUCHABILITY

At this time of the day it is unnecessary to dilate upon the necessity of the removal of this blot and

curse upon Hinduism. Congressmen have certainly done much in this matter. But I am sorry to have to say that many Congressmen have looked upon this item as a mere political necessity and not something indispensable, so far as Hindus are concerned, for the very existence of Hinduism. If Hindu Congressmen take up the cause for its own sake, they will influence the so-called *Sanatanis* far more extensively than they have hitherto done. They should approach them not in a militant spirit but, as befits their non-violence, in a spirit of friendliness. And so far as the Harijans are concerned, every Hindu should make common cause with them and befriend them in their awful isolation—such isolation as perhaps the world has never seen in the monstrous immensity one witnesses in India. I know from experience how difficult the task is. But it is part of the task of building the edifice of Swaraj. And the road to Swaraj is steep and narrow. There are many slippery ascents and many deep chasms. They have all to be negotiated with unfaltering step before we can reach the summit and breathe the fresh air of freedom.

### 3 PROHIBITION

Although like communal unity and removal of untouchability prohibition has been on the Congress programme since 1920, Congressmen have not taken the interest they might have taken in this very vital social and moral reform. If we are to reach our goal through non-violent effort, we may not leave to the future government the fate of lakhs of men and women

who are labouring under the curse of intoxicants and narcotics.

Medical men can make a most effective contribution towards the removal of this evil. They have to discover ways of weaning the drunkard and the opium-addict from the curse

Women and students have a special opportunity in advancing this reform. By many acts of loving service they can acquire on addicts a hold which will compel them to listen to the appeal to give up the evil habit.

Congress committees can open recreation booths where the tired labourer will rest his limbs, get healthy and cheap refreshments, and find suitable games. All this work is fascinating and uplifting. The non-violent approach to Swaraj is a novel approach. In it old values give place to new. In the violent way such reforms may find no place. Believers in that way, in their impatience and, shall I say, ignorance, put off such things to the day of deliverance. They forget that lasting and healthy deliverance comes from within, i.e. from self-purification. Constructive workers make legal prohibition easy and successful even if they do not pave the way for it

#### 4. KHADI

*Khadi* is a controversial subject. Many people think that in advocating *Khadi* I am sailing against a headwind and am sure to sink the ship of Swaraj and that I am taking the country to the dark ages. I do not propose to argue the case for *Khadi* in this brief

survey. I have argued it sufficiently elsewhere. Here I want to show what every Congressman, and for that matter every Indian, can do to advance the cause of *Khadi*. It connotes the beginning of economic freedom and equality of all in the country. "The proof of the pudding is in the eating" Let everyone try, and he or she will find out for himself or herself the truth of what I am saying. *Khadi*, must be taken with all its implications. It means a wholesale Swadeshi mentality, a determination to find all the necessities of life in India and that too through the labour and intellect of the villagers. That means a reversal of the existing process That is to say that, instead of half a dozen cities of India and Great Britain living on the exploitation and the ruin of the 7,00,000 villages of India, the latter will be largely self-contained, and will voluntarily serve the cities of India and even the outside world in so far as it benefits both the parties

This needs a revolutionary change in the mentality and tastes of many. Easy though the non-violent way is in many respects, it is very difficult in many others It vitally touches the life of every single Indian, makes him feel aglow with the possession of a power that has lain hidden within himself, and makes him proud of his identity with every drop of the ocean of Indian humanity This non-violence is not the inanity for which we have mistaken it through all these long ages; it is the most potent force as yet known to mankind and on which its very existence is

dependent. It is that force which I have tried to present to the Congress and through it to the world. *Khadi* to me is the symbol of unity of Indian humanity, of its economic freedom and equality and, therefore, ultimately, in the poetic expression of Jawaharlal Nehru, "the livery of India's freedom".

Moreover, *Khadi* mentality means decentralization of the production and distribution of the necessities of life. Therefore, the formula so far evolved is, every village to produce all its necessities and a certain percentage in addition for the requirements of the cities

Heavy industries will needs be centralized and nationalized. But they will occupy the least part of the vast national activity which will mainly be in the villages.

Having explained the implications of *Khadi*, I must indicate what Congressmen can and should do towards its promotion. Production of *Khadi* includes cotton growing, picking, ginning, cleaning, carding, slivering, spinning, sizing, dyeing, preparing the warp and the woof, weaving, and washing. These, with the exception of dyeing, are essential processes. Every one of them can be effectively handled in the villages and is being so handled in many villages throughout India which the A I S A. is covering. According to the latest report the following are the interesting figures:

2,75,146 villagers, including 19,645 Harijans and 57,378 Muslims, scattered in at least 13,451 villages,

received, as spinners, weavers, etc., Rs 34,85,609 in 1940. The spinners were largely women.

Yet the work done is only one-hundredth part of what could be done if Congressmen honestly took up the *Khadi* programme. Since the wanton destruction of this central village industry and the allied handicrafts, intelligence and brightness have fled from the villages, leaving them inane, lustreless, and reduced almost to the state of their ill-kept cattle.

If Congressmen will be true to their Congress call in respect of *Khadi*, they will carry out the instructions of the A I S A issued from time to time as to the part they can play in *Khadi* planning. Only a few broad rules can be laid down here.

1. Every family with a plot of ground can grow cotton at least for family use. Cotton growing is an easy process. In Bihar the cultivators were by law compelled to grow indigo on  $\frac{3}{20}$  of their cultivable land. This was in the interest of the foreign indigo planter. Why cannot we grow cotton voluntarily for the nation on a certain portion of our land? The reader will note that decentralization commences from the beginning of the *Khadi* processes. Today cotton crop is centralized and has to be sent to distant parts of India. Before the war it used to be sent principally to Britain and Japan. It was and still is a money crop and, therefore, subject to the fluctuations of the market. Under the *Khadi* scheme cotton-growing becomes free from this uncertainty and gamble. The grower grows what he needs. The farmer needs to



know that his first business is to grow for his own needs. When he does that, he will reduce the chance of a low market ruining him.

2. Every spinner would buy—if he has not his own—enough cotton for ginning, which he can easily do without the hand-ginning roller frame. He can gin his own portion with a board and an iron rolling pin. Where this is considered impracticable, hand-ginned cotton should be bought and carded. Carding for self can be done well on a tiny bow without much effort. The greater the decentralization of labour, the simpler and cheaper the tools. The slivers made, the process of spinning commences. I strongly recommend the *dhanush takli*. I have used it frequently. My speed on it is almost the same as on the wheel. I draw a finer thread and the strength and evenness of the yarn are greater on the *dhanush takli* than on the wheel. This may not, however, hold good for all. My emphasis on the *dhanush takli* is based on the fact that it is more easily made, is cheaper than and does not require frequent repairs like the wheel. Unless one knows how to make the two *mals* and to adjust them when they slip or to put the wheel right when it refuses to work, the wheel has often to lie idle. Moreover, if the millions take to spinning at once, as they well may have to, the *dhanush takli*, being the instrument most easily made and handled, is the only tool that can meet the demand. It is more easily made even than the simple *takli*. The best, easiest and cheapest way is to make it oneself. Indeed one ought

to learn how to handle and make simple tools. Imagine the unifying and educative effect of the whole nation simultaneously taking part in the process up to spinning! Consider the levelling effect of the bond of common labour between the rich and the poor!

Yarn thus produced may be used in three ways by presenting it to the A I S A for the sake of the poor, by having it woven for personal use, or by getting as much *Khaai* for it as it can buy. It is clear enough that the finer and better the yarn the greater will be its value. If Congressmen will put their heart into the work, they will make improvements in the tools and make many discoveries. In our country there has been a divorce between labour and intelligence. The result has been stagnation. If there is an indissoluble marriage between the two, and that in the manner here suggested, the resultant good will be inestimable.

In this scheme of nation-wide spinning as a sacrifice, I do not expect the average man or woman to give more than one hour daily to this work.

## 5 OTHER VILLAGE INDUSTRIES

These stand on a different footing from *Khadi*. There is not much scope for voluntary labour in them. Each industry will take the labour of only a certain number of hands. These industries come in as a hand-maid to *Khadi*. They cannot exist without *Khadi*, and *Khadi* will be robbed of its dignity without them. Village economy cannot be complete without the essential village industries such as hand-grinding, hand-pound-

ing, soap-making, paper-making, match-making, tanning, oil-pressing, etc. Congressmen can interest themselves in these and, if they are villagers or will settle down in villages, they will give these industries a new life and a new dress. All should make it a point of honour to use only village articles whenever and wherever available. Given the demand there is no doubt that most of our wants can be supplied from our villages. When we have become village-minded, we will not want imitations of the West or machine-made products, but we will develop a true national taste in keeping with the vision of a new India in which pauperism, starvation and idleness will be unknown.

#### 6. VILLAGE SANITATION

Divorce between intelligence and labour has resulted in criminal negligence of the villages. And so, instead of having graceful hamlets dotting the land, we have dung-heaps. The approach to many villages is not a refreshing experience. Often one would like to shut one's eyes and stuff one's nose, such is the surrounding dirt and offending smell. If the majority of Congressmen were derived from our villages, as they should be, they should be able to make our villages models of cleanliness in every sense of the word. But they have never considered it their duty to identify themselves with the villagers in their daily lives. A sense of national or social sanitation is not a virtue among us. We may take a kind of a bath, but we do not mind dirtying the well or the tank or the river by whose side or in which we perform ablu-

tions. I regard this defect as a great vice which is responsible for the disgraceful state of our villages and the sacred banks of the sacred rivers and for the diseases that spring from insanitation

## 7 NEW OR BASIC EDUCATION

This is a new subject. But the members of the Working Committee felt so much interested in it that they gave a charter to the organizers of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh which has been functioning since the Haripura session. This is a big field of work for many Congressmen. This education is meant to transform village children into model villagers. It is principally designed for them. The inspiration for it has come from the villages. Congressmen who want to build up the structure of Swaraj from its very foundation dare not neglect the children. Foreign rule has unconsciously, though none the less surely, begun with the children in the field of education. Primary education is a farce designed without regard to the wants of the India of the villages and for that matter even of the cities. Basic education links the children, whether of the cities or the villages, to all that is best and lasting in India. It develops both the body and the mind, and keeps the child rooted to the soil with a glorious vision of the future in the realization of which he or she begins to take his or her share from the very commencement of his or her career in school. Congressmen would find it of absorbing interest benefiting themselves equally with the children with whom they come in contact. Let those who wish, put

themselves in touch with the Secretary of the Sangh at Sevagram

### 8. ADULT EDUCATION

This has been woefully neglected by Congressmen. Where they have not neglected it, they have been satisfied with teaching illiterates to read and write. If I had charge of adult education, I should begin with opening the minds of the adult pupils to the greatness and vastness of their country. The villager's India is contained in his village. If he goes to another village, he talks of his own village as his home. Hindustan is for him a geographical term. We have no notion of the ignorance prevailing in the villages. The villagers know nothing of foreign rule and its evils. What little knowledge they have picked up fills them with the awe the foreigner inspires. The result is the dread and hatred of the foreigner and his rule. They do not know how to get rid of it. They do not know that the foreigner's presence is due to their own weaknesses and their ignorance of the power they possess to rid themselves of the foreign rule. My adult education means, therefore, first, true political education of the adult by word of mouth. Seeing that this will be mapped out it can be given without fear. I imagine that it is too late in the day for authority to interfere with this type of education; but if there is interference, there must be a fight for this elementary right without which there can be no Swaraj. Of course, in all I have written, openness has been assumed. Non-violence abhors fear and, therefore, secrecy.

Side by side with the education by the mouth will be the literary education. This is itself a speciality. Many methods are being tried in order to shorten the period of education. A temporary or permanent board of experts may be appointed by the Working Committee to give shape to the idea here adumbrated and guide the workers. I admit that what I have said in this paragraph only points the way but does not tell the average Congressman how to go about it. Nor is every Congressman fitted for this highly special work. But Congressmen who are teachers should find no difficulty in laying down a course in keeping with the suggestions made herein.

#### 9. WOMEN

I have included service of women in the constructive programme, for though *satyagraha* has automatically brought India's women out from their darkness, as nothing else could have in such an incredibly short space of time, Congressmen have not felt the call to see that women became equal partners in the fight for Swaraj. They have not realized that woman must be the true helpmate of man in the mission of service. Woman has been suppressed under custom and law for which man was responsible and in the shaping of which she had no hand. In a plan of life based on non-violence, woman has as much right to shape her own destiny as man has to shape his. But as every right in a non-violent society proceeds from the previous performance of a duty, it follows that rules of social conduct must be framed

by mutual co-operation and consultation. They can never be imposed from outside. Men have not realized this truth in its fulness in their behaviour towards women. They have considered themselves to be lords and masters of women instead of considering them as their friends and co-workers. It is the privilege of Congressmen to give the women of India a lifting hand. Women are in the position somewhat of the slave of old who did not know that he could or ever had to be free. And when freedom came, for the moment he felt helpless. Women have been taught to regard themselves as slaves of men. It is up to Congressmen to see that they enable them to realize their full status and play their part as equals of men.

This revolution is easy, if the mind is made up. Let Congressmen begin with their own homes. Wives should not be dolls and objects of indulgence, but should be treated as honoured comrades in common service. To this end those who have not received a liberal education should receive such instruction as is possible from their husbands. The same observation applies, with the necessary changes, to mothers and daughters.

It is hardly necessary to point out that I have given a one-sided picture of the helpless state of Indian women. I am quite conscious of the fact that in the villages generally they hold their own with their menfolk and in some respects even rule them. But to the impartial outsider the legal and customary status of

woman is bad enough throughout and demands radical alteration

#### 10. EDUCATION IN HEALTH AND HYGIENE

Having given a place to village sanitation, the question may be asked why give a separate place to education in health and hygiene? It might have been bracketed with sanitation, but I did not wish to interfere with the items. Mention of mere sanitation is not enough to include health and hygiene. The art of keeping one's health and the knowledge of hygiene is by itself a separate subject of study and corresponding practice. In a well-ordered society the citizens know and observe the laws of health and hygiene. It is established beyond doubt that ignorance and neglect of the laws of health and hygiene are responsible for the majority of diseases to which mankind is heir. The very high death rate among us is no doubt due largely to our gnawing poverty, but it could be mitigated if the people were properly educated about health and hygiene.

*Mens sana in corpore sano* is perhaps the first law for humanity. A healthy mind in a healthy body is a self-evident truth. There is an inevitable connection between mind and body. If we were in possession of healthy minds, we would shed all violence and, naturally obeying the laws of health, we would have healthy bodies without an effort. I hope, therefore, that no Congressmen will disregard this item of the constructive programme. The fundamental laws of health and hygiene are simple and easily learnt.



The difficulty is about their observance. Here are some:

Think the purest thoughts and banish all idle and impure thoughts.

Breathe the freshest air day and night.

Establish a balance between bodily and mental work.

Stand erect, sit erect, and be neat and clean in every one of your acts, and let these be an expression of your inner condition.

Eat to live for service of fellow-men. Do not live for indulging yourselves. Hence your food must be just enough to keep your mind and body in good order. Man becomes what he eats.

Your water, food and air must be clean, and you will not be satisfied with mere personal cleanliness, but you will infect your surroundings with the same threefold cleanliness that you will desire for yourselves.

## 11. PROVINCIAL LANGUAGES

Our love of the English language in preference to our own mother tongue has caused a deep chasm between the educated and politically-minded classes and the masses. The languages of India have suffered impoverishment. We flounder when we make the vain attempt to express abstruse thought in the mother tongue. There are no equivalents for scientific terms. The result has been disastrous. The masses remain cut off from the modern mind. We are too near our own times correctly to measure the disservice caused to India by this neglect of its great languages. It is

easy enough to understand that, unless we undo the mischief, the mass mind must remain imprisoned. The masses can make no solid contribution to the construction of Swaraj. It is inherent in Swaraj based on non-violence that every individual makes his own direct contribution to the Independence' movement. The masses cannot do this fully unless they understand every step with all its implications. This is impossible unless every step is explained in their own languages.

## 12. NATIONAL LANGUAGE

And then for all-India intercourse we need, from among the Indian stock, a language which the largest number of people already know and understand and which the others can easily pick up. This language is indisputably Hindi. It is spoken and understood by both Hindus and Muslims of the North. It is called Urdu when it is written in the Urdu character. The Congress, in its famous resolution passed at the Cawnpore session in 1925, called this all-India speech Hindustani. And since that time, in theory at least, Hindustani has been the Rashtra Bhasha. I say 'in theory' because even Congressmen have not practised it as they should have. In 1920 a deliberate attempt was begun to recognize the importance of Indian languages for the political education of the masses, as also of an all-India common speech which politically-minded India could easily speak and which Congressmen from the different provinces could understand at all-India gatherings of the Congress.

Such National language should enable one to understand and speak both forms of speech and write in both the scripts.

I am sorry to have to say that many Congressmen have failed to carry out that resolution. And so we have, in my opinion, the shameful spectacle of Congressmen insisting on speaking in English and compelling others to do likewise for their sakes. The spell that English has cast on us is not yet broken. Being under it, we are impeding the progress of India towards her goal. Our love of the masses must be skin-deep, if we will not take the trouble of spending over learning Hindustani as many months as the years we spend over learning English.

### 13. ECONOMIC EQUALITY

This last is the master key to non-violent Independence. Working for economic equality means abolishing the eternal conflict between capital and labour. It means the levelling down of the few rich in whose hands is concentrated the bulk of the nation's wealth on the one hand, and the levelling up of the semi-starved naked millions on the other. A non-violent system of government is clearly an impossibility so long as the wide gulf between the rich and the hungry millions persists. The contrast between the palaces of New Delhi and the miserable hovels of the poor labouring class nearby cannot last one day in a free India in which the poor will enjoy the same power as the richest in the land. A violent and bloody revolution is a certainty one day unless there is

voluntary abdication of riches and the power that riches give and sharing them for the common good

I adhere to my doctrine of trusteeship in spite of the ridicule that has been poured upon it. It is true that it is difficult to reach. So is non-violence. But we made up our minds in 1920 to negotiate that steep ascent. We have found it worth the effort. It involves a daily growing appreciation of the working of non-violence. It is expected that Congressmen will make a diligent search and reason out for themselves the why and the wherefore of non-violence. They should ask themselves how the existing inequalities can be abolished violently or non-violently. I think we know the violent way. It has not succeeded anywhere.

This non-violent experiment is still in the making. We have nothing much yet to show by way of demonstration. It is certain, however, that the method has begun to work though ever so slowly in the direction of equality. And since non-violence is a process of conversion, the conversion, if achieved, must be permanent. A society or a nation constructed non-violently must be able to withstand attack upon its structure from without or within. We have moneyed Congressmen in the organization. They have to lead the way. This fight provides an opportunity for the closest heart-searching on the part of every individual Congressman. If ever we are to achieve equality, the foundation has to be laid now. Those who think that the major reforms will come after the advent of Swaraj are deceiving themselves.

as to the elementary working of non-violent Swaraj. It will not drop from heaven all of a sudden one fine morning. But it has to be built up brick by brick by corporate self-effort. We have travelled a fair way in that direction. But a much longer and weary distance has to be covered before we can behold Swaraj in its glorious majesty. Every Congressman has to ask himself what he has done towards the attainment of economic equality.

#### 14. KISANS

The programme is not exhaustive Swaraj is a mighty structure. Eighty crores of hands have to work at building it. Of these *kisans*, i e , the peasantry are the largest part In fact, being the bulk of them (probably over 80%) the *kisans* should be the Congress. But they are not. When they become conscious of their non-violent strength, no power on earth can resist them

They must not be used for power politics I consider it to be contrary to the non-violent method Those who would know my method of organizing *kisans* may profitably study the movement in Champaran when *satyagraha* was tried for the first time in India with the result all India knows. It became a mass movement which remained wholly non-violent from start to finish. It affected over twenty lakhs of *kisans*. The struggle centred round one specific grievance which was a century old. There had been several violent revolts to get rid of the grievance The *kisans* were suppressed. The non-violent remedy suc-

ceeded in full in six months. The *kisans* of Champaran became politically conscious without any direct effort. The tangible proof they had of the working of non-violence to remove their grievance drew them to the Congress, and led by Babu Brijkishoreprasad and Babu Rajendraprasad they gave a good account of themselves during the past Civil Disobedience campaigns.

The reader may also profitably study the *kisan* movements in Kheda, Bardoli and Borsad. The secret of success lies in a refusal to exploit the *kisans* for political purposes outside their own personal and felt grievances. Organization round a specific wrong they understand. They need no sermons on non-violence. Let them learn to apply non-violence as an effective remedy which they can understand, and later when they are told that the method they were applying was non-violent, they readily recognize it as such.

From these illustrations Congressmen who care could study how work can be done for and among *kisans*. I hold that the method that some Congressmen have followed to organize *kisans* has done them no good and has probably harmed them. Anyway they have not used the non-violent method. Be it said to the credit of some of these workers that they frankly admit that they do not believe in the non-violent method. My advice to such workers would be that they should neither use the Congress name nor work as Congressmen.

The reader will now understand why I have refrained from the competition to organize *Kisans* and

Labour on an all-India basis How I wish that all hands pulled in the same direction! But perhaps in a huge country like ours it is impossible. Anyway, in non-violence there is no coercion. Cold reason and demonstration of the working of non-violence must be trusted to do the work

In my opinion, like labour, they should have under the Congress, a department working for their specific questions.

### 15. LABOUR

Ahmedabad Labour Union is a model for all India to copy. Its basis is non-violence, pure and simple. It has never had a set-back in its career. It has gone on from strength to strength without fuss and without show. It has its hospital, its schools for the children of the mill-hands, its classes for adults, its own printing press and *khadi* depot, and its own residential quarters. Almost all the hands are voters and decide the fate of elections. They came on the voters' list at the instance of the Provincial Congress Committee. The organization has never taken part in party politics of the Congress. It influences the municipal policy of the city. It has to its credit very successful strikes which were wholly non-violent. Mill-owners and labour have governed their relations largely through voluntary arbitration. If I had my way, I would regulate all the labour organizations of India after the Ahmedabad model. It has never sought to intrude itself upon the All-India Trade Union Congress and has been uninfluenced by that

Congress A time, I hope, will come when it will be possible for the Trade Union Congress to accept the Ahmedabad method and have the Ahmedabad organization as part of the All-India Union But I am in no hurry. It will come in its own time

## 16 ADIVASIS

The term *adivasi*, like *ramparaj*, is a coined word *Ramparaj* stands for *kaliparaj* (meaning black people, though their skin is no more black than that of any other) It was coined, I think by Shri Jugatram The term *adivasi* (for Bhils, Gonds, or others variously described as Hill Tribes or aboriginals) means literally original inhabitants and was coined, I believe, by Thakkar Bapa.

Service of *adivasis* is also a part of the constructive programme. Though they are the sixteenth number in this programme, they are not the least in point of importance Our country is so vast and the races so varied that the best of us cannot know all there is to know of men and their condition As one discovers this for oneself, one realizes how difficult it is to make good our claim to be one nation, unless every unit has a living consciousness of being one with every other

The *adivasis* are over two crores in all India. Bapa began work among the Bhils years ago in Gujarat. In about 1940 Shri Balasaheb Kher threw himself with his usual zeal into this much-needed service in the Thana District He is now President of the Adivasi Seva Mandal



There are several such other workers in other parts of India and yet they are too few. Truly, "the harvest is rich but the labourers are few" Who can deny that all such service is not merely humanitarian but solidly national, and brings us nearer to true independence?

### 17. LEPERS

Leper is a word of bad odour. India is perhaps a home of lepers next only to Central Africa. Yet they are as much a part of society as the tallest among us. But the tall absorb our attention though they are least in need of it. The lot of the lepers who are much in need of attention is studied neglect. I am tempted to call it heartless, which it certainly is, in terms of non-violence. It is largely the missionary who, be it said to his credit, bestows care on him. The only institution run by an Indian, as a pure labour of love, is by Shri Manohar Diwan near Wardha. It is working under the inspiration and guidance of Shri Vinoba Bhave. If India was pulsating with new life, if we were all in earnest about winning independence in the quickest manner possible by truthful and non-violent means, there would not be a leper or beggar in India uncared for and unaccounted for. In this revised edition I am deliberately introducing the leper as a link in the chain of constructive effort. For, what the leper is in India, that we are, if we will but look about us, for the modern civilized world. Examine the condition of our brethren across the ocean and the truth of my remark will be borne home to us.



NURSING THE LEPER



## 18. STUDENTS

I have reserved students to the last I have always cultivated close contact with them. They know me and I know them They have given me service Many ex-collegians are my esteemed co-workers I know that they are the hope of the future In the heyday of non-co-operation they were invited to leave their schools and colleges Some professors and students who responded to the Congress call have remained steadfast and gained much for the country and themselves The call has not been repeated for there is not the atmosphere for it But experience has shown that the lure of the current education, though it is false and unnatural, is too much for the youth of the country College education provides a career It is a passport for entrance to the charmed circle Pardonable hunger for knowledge cannot be satisfied otherwise than by going through the usual rut They do not mind the waste of precious years in acquiring knowledge of an utterly foreign language which takes the place of the mother tongue The sin of it is never felt They and their teachers have made up their minds that the indigenous languages are useless for gaining access to modern thought and the modern sciences I wonder how the Japanese are faring For, their education, I understand, is all given in Japanese. The Chinese Generalissimo knows very little, if anything, of English

But such as the students are, it is from these young men and women that the future leaders of the

nation are to rise Unfortunately they are acted upon by every variety of influences Non-violence offers them little attraction A blow for a blow or two for one is an easily understandable proposition. It seems to yield immediate result though momentary. It is a never-ending trial of brute strength as we see in time of war among brutes or among human beings. Appreciation of non-violence means patient research and still more patient and difficult practice I have not entered the list of competitors for the students' hand, for the reasons that have dictated my course about *Kisans* and Labour But I am myself a fellow student, using the word in its broader sense My university is different from theirs They have a standing invitation from me to come to my university and join me in my search Here are the terms.

1. Students must not take part in party politics. They are students, searchers, not politicians

- 2 They may not resort to political strikes. They must have their heroes, but their devotion to them is to be shown by copying the best in their heroes, not by going on strikes, if the heroes are imprisoned or die or are even sent to the gallows If their grief is unbearable and if all the students feel equally, schools or colleges may be closed on such occasions, with the consent of their principals If the principals will not listen, it is open to the students to leave their institutions in a becoming manner till the managers repent and recall them On no account may they use coercion against dissentients or against

the authorities. They must have the confidence that, if they are united and dignified in their conduct, they are sure to win.

3. They must all do sacrificial spinning in a scientific manner. Their tools shall be always neat, clean, and in good order and condition. If possible, they will learn to make them themselves. Their yarn will naturally be of the highest quality. They will study the literature about spinning with all its economic, social, moral and political implications.

4. They will be *khadi*-users all through and use village products to the exclusion of all analogous things, foreign or machine-made.

5. They may not impose *Vande Mataram* or the National Flag on others. They may wear National Flag buttons on their own persons but not force others to do the same.

6. They can enforce the message of the tricolour flag in their own persons and harbour neither communalism nor untouchability in their hearts. They will cultivate real friendship with students of other faiths and with Harijans as if they were their own kith and kin.

7. They will make it a point to give first aid to their injured neighbours and do scavenging and cleaning in the neighbouring villages and instruct village children and adults.

8. They will learn the national language, Hindustani, in its present double dress, two forms of speech and two scripts, so that they may feel at home

whether Hindi or Urdu is spoken and *nagari* or *urdu* script is written.

9 They will translate into their own mother tongue everything new they may learn, and transmit it in their weekly rounds to the surrounding villages.

10 They will do nothing in secret, they will be above board in all their dealings, they will lead a pure life of self-restraint, shed all fear and be always ready to protect their weak fellow-students, and be ready to quell riots by non-violent conduct at the risk of their lives. And when the final heat of the struggle comes they will leave their institutions and, if need be, sacrifice themselves for the freedom of their country.

11. They will be scrupulously correct and chivalrous in their behaviour towards their girl fellow-students.

For working out the programme I have sketched for them, the students must find time. I know that they waste a great deal of time in idleness. By strict economy, they can save many hours. But I do not want to put an undue strain upon any student. I would, therefore, advise patriotic students to lose one year, not at a stretch but spread it over their whole study. They will find that one year so given will not be a waste of time. The effort will add to their equipment, mental, moral and physical, and they will have made even during their studies a substantial contribution to the freedom movement.

## PLACE OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

I have said in these pages that Civil Disobedience is not absolutely necessary to win freedom through purely non-violent effort, if the co-operation of the whole nation is secured in the constructive programme. But such good luck rarely favours nations or individuals. Therefore, it is necessary to know the place of Civil Disobedience in a nation-wide non-violent effort.

It has three definite functions :

1 It can be effectively offered for the redress of a local wrong.

2. It can be offered without regard to effect, though aimed at a particular wrong or evil, by way of self-immolation in order to rouse local consciousness or conscience. Such was the case in Champaran when I offered Civil Disobedience without any regard to the effect and well knowing that even the people might remain apathetic. That it proved otherwise may be taken, according to taste, as God's grace or a stroke of good luck.

3 In the place of full response to constructive effort, it can be offered as it was in 1941. Though it was a contribution to and part of the battle for freedom, it was purposely centred round a particular issue, i.e. free speech. Civil Disobedience can never be directed for a general cause such as for Independence. The issue must be definite and capable of being clearly understood and within the power of the opponent to yield. This method properly applied must lead to the final goal.



I have not examined here the full scope and possibilities of Civil Disobedience. I have touched enough of it to enable the reader to understand the connection between the constructive programme and Civil Disobedience. In the first two cases, no elaborate constructive programme was or could be necessary. But when Civil Disobedience is itself devised for the attainment of Independence, previous preparation is necessary, and it has to be backed by the visible and conscious effort of those who are engaged in the battle. Civil Disobedience is thus a stimulation for the fighters and a challenge to the opponent. It should be clear to the reader that Civil Disobedience in terms of Independence without the co-operation of the millions by way of constructive effort is mere bravado and worse than useless.

#### CONCLUSION

This is not a thesis written on behalf of the Congress or at the instance of the Central Office. It is the outcome of conversations I had with some co-workers in Sevagram. They had felt the want of something from my pen showing the connection between the constructive programme and Civil Disobedience and how the former might be worked. I have endeavoured to supply the want in this pamphlet. It does not purport to be exhaustive, but it is sufficiently indicative of the way the programme should be worked.

Let not the reader make the mistake of laughing at any of the items as being part of the movement for Independence. Many people do many things,

big and small, without connecting them with non-violence or Independence. They have then their limited value as expected. The same man appearing as a civilian may be of no consequence, but appearing in his capacity as General he is a big personage, holding the lives of millions at his mercy. Similarly, the *charlha* in the hands of a poor widow brings a paltry pice to her, in the hands of a Jawaharlal it is an instrument of India's freedom. It is the office which gives the *charlha* its dignity. It is the office assigned to the constructive programme which gives it an irresistible prestige and power.

Such at least is my view. It may be that of a mad man. If it makes no appeal to the Congressman, I must be rejected. For my handling of Civil Disobedience without the constructive programme will be like a paralyzed hand attempting to lift a spoon.

Pooná, 13-11-1945

## APPENDICES

### I

#### IMPROVEMENT OF CATTLE

[This is what Gandhiji wrote sometime ago about adding *Goseva* as one more item in the Constructive Programme. J. Desai]

Extract from a letter written by Gandhiji to Shri Jivanji Desai :

Sodepur,

16-1-'46

“ . . You are right, cow service (*goseva*) should be included as one more item in the Constructive Programme. I would phrase it as improvement of cattle. I think it should not have been left out. We shall see about it when the next edition is out.”

### II

#### CONGRESS POSITION

Indian National Congress which is the oldest national political organization and which has after many battles fought her non-violent way to freedom cannot be allowed to die. It can only die with the nation. A living organism ever grows or it dies. The Congress has won political freedom, but it has yet to win economic freedom, social and moral freedom. These freedoms are harder than the political, if only because they are constructive, less exciting and not spectacular. All-embracing constructive work evokes the energy of all the units of the millions.

The Congress has got the preliminary and necessary part of her freedom. The hardest has yet to come. In its difficult ascent to democracy, it has inevitably created rotten boroughs leading to corruption and creation of institutions, popular and democratic only in name. How to get out of the weedy and unwieldy growth?

The Congress *must* do away with its special register of members, at no time exceeding one crore, not even then easily identifiable. It had an unknown register of millions who could never be wanted. Its register should now be co-extensive with all the men and women on the voters' rolls in the country. The Congress business should be to see that no faked name gets in and no legitimate name is left out. On its own register it will have a body of servants of the nation who would be workers doing the work allotted to them from time to time.

Unfortunately for the country they will be drawn chiefly for the time being from the city dwellers, most of whom would be required to work for and in the villages of India. The ranks must be filled in increasing numbers from villagers.

These servants will be expected to operate upon and serve the voters registered according to law, in their own surroundings. Many persons and parties will woo them. The very best will win. Thus and in no other way can the Congress regain its fast ebbing unique position in the country. But yesterday the Congress was unwittingly the servant of the Nation,

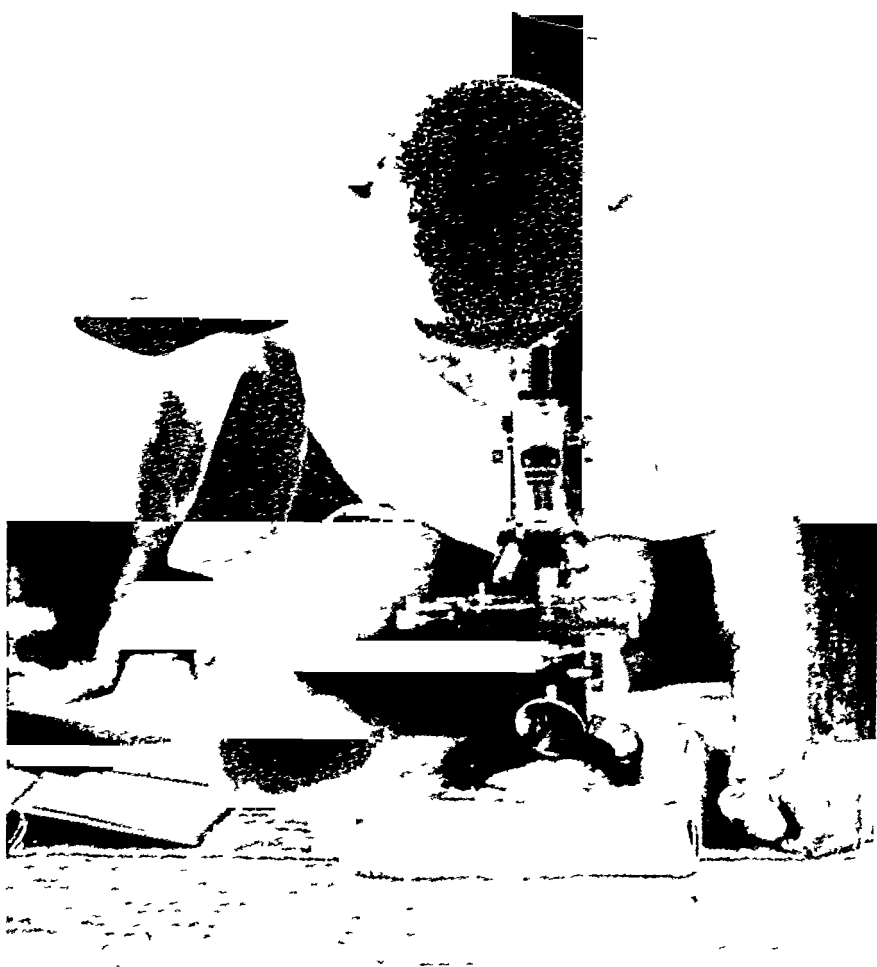
it was *khudai khidmatgar*—God's servant. Let it now proclaim to itself and the world that it is only God's servant—nothing more, nothing less. If it engages in the ungainly skirmish for power, it will find one fine morning that it is no more. Thank God, it is now no longer in sole possession of the field.

I have only opened to view the distant scene. If I have the time and health, I hope to discuss in these columns what the servants of the Nation can *do* to raise themselves in the estimation of their masters, the whole of the adult population, male and female.

New Delhi, 27-1-'48

M. K. GANDHI





GANDHIJI

# KEY TO HEALTH





## A WORD BY THE PUBLISHER

Gandhiji wrote these chapters while he was confined in the Aga Khan Palace at Poona during 1942-'44. As the manuscript indicates he began to pen them on 27-8-1942 and completed them on 18-12-1942. To him the subject was so important that he hesitated to release them at once, and took time to go through them again and again till the treatment was to his full satisfaction. He intended to correct these chapters if his ever-growing experience so dictated. The original was written in Gujarati and Gandhiji got it translated in Hindustani and English by Dr. Sushila Nayar under his own guidance. He also went through both the translations to give them the final touches.

The reader can therefore take the translation as Gandhiji's own rendering of what he wished to convey to his people and to the world on the vital question of health. To him the study of this question was part of the service of God and His creation which was his mission.

2-10-'48

## SUBJECT INDEX

[This synopsis of the topics discussed in the book was prepared by Gandhiji himself in the original Gujarati during his leisure. To preserve it as an indication of his deep interest in the subject and of his characteristic of taking immense pains in whatever work he undertook, we have thought it proper to include it in the English translation in place of an index at the end. That it is fully exhaustive is evident even at a mere glance. J. D.]

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## PREFACE

For the benefit of the readers of the *Indian Opinion* (South Africa), I wrote a few articles under the heading *Guide to Health* in or about the year 1906. These were later published in book form. I found that it was known to the Indian public. But copies were not available in India. The late Swami Akhandanand asked for my permission to publish an Indian edition. The enterprise proved very popular. The book was translated into several Indian languages. An English translation also appeared. This reached the West, and was translated in several European languages. The result was that the book became the most popular of all my writings. I have never been able to understand the reason for this popularity. I had written those articles casually, and I did not attach much importance to them. But perhaps the reason for the popularity is to be sought in the fact that I have looked upon the problem of health from a novel point of view, somewhat different from the orthodox methods adopted by doctors and  *vaidyas*. Whether my presumption is correct or not, many friends have been pressing me to publish a new edition, putting forth my views to date. I have never been able to revise the original. I have never had the time for it. The present enforced rest offers me such an opportunity and I am taking advantage of it. I have not even got the original with me. The experience of so many years cannot

but have left its mark upon my thought. But those who have read the original book will notice that there is no fundamental difference between my ideas of today and those of 1906. But my mind is responsive. Therefore, whatever change the reader may find will, I hope, be in the nature of a progress

I am giving a new name *Key to Health*. Anyone who observes the rules of health mentioned in this book will find that he has got in it a real key to unlock the gates leading him to health. He will not need to knock at the doors of doctors or *vaidyas* from day to day

Aga Khan Palace,  
Yeravda, 27-8-'42

M. K. GANDHI



# **KEY TO HEALTH**

## **PART I**







about things that have no bearing on our daily life. I do not mean to say that such knowledge is of no use. But everything has its own place. We must first know enough of our own body, our own house, our village and its surroundings, the crops that grow there and its history before going on to anything else. General knowledge broad-based on this primary knowledge, alone can enrich life.

The human body is composed of what the ancient philosophers have described as the five elements. These are earth, water, vacancy, light and air.

All human activity is carried on by means of the mind aided by the ten senses. These are the five senses of action, i.e. hands, feet, mouth, anus and the genitals, and the five senses of perception, i. e. the sense of touch through the skin, of smell through the nose, of taste through the tongue, of seeing through the eyes and of hearing through the ears. Thinking is the function of the mind and some people have called it the eleventh sense. In health all the senses and the mind act in perfect co-ordination.

The inner working of the human machine is wonderful. The human body is the universe in miniature. That which cannot be found in the body is not to be found in the universe. Hence the philosopher's formula, that the universe within reflects the universe without. It follows therefore that if our knowledge of our own body could be perfect we would know the universe. But even the very best of doctors and *hakims* and *vaids* have not been able to acquire it. It

will be presumptuous for a layman to aspire to it. No one has yet discovered an instrument which can give us any information about the human mind. Scientists have given attractive descriptions of the activities going on within and without the body, but no one can say what sets the wheel going. Who can explain the why and wherefore of death or foretell its time? In short, after infinite reading and writing, after infinite experience, man has come to know how little he knows.

A happy working of the human machine depends upon the harmonious activity of the various component parts. If all these work in an orderly manner, the machine runs smoothly. If even one of the essential parts is out of order, it comes to a stop. For instance, if the digestion is out of order, the whole body becomes slack. Therefore, he who takes indigestion and constipation lightly does not know the a-b-c of the rules of health. These two are the root cause of innumerable ailments.

The question that demands our attention next is what is the use of the human body? Everything in the world can be used and abused. This applies to the body also. We abuse it when we use it for selfish purposes, for self-indulgence or in order to harm another. It is put to its right use if we exercise self-restraint and dedicate ourselves to the service of the whole world. The human soul is a part of the universal spirit or God. When all our activity is directed towards the realization of this link, the body

becomes a temple worthy for the spirit to live in.

The body has been described as a mine of dirt. Looked at in its proper perspective, there is no exaggeration in this statement. If the body was nothing else but this, there could be no point in taking such pains to look after it. But if this so-called mine of dirt can be put to its proper use, it becomes our first duty to cleanse it and keep it in a fit condition. The mines of precious stones and gold also have the look of ordinary earth on the surface. The knowledge that there are gold and precious stones underneath, induces men to spend millions and engage scientific brains in order to get at what lies in those mines. Similarly, we cannot take too much pains over keeping in a fit condition the temple of the spirit—the human body

Man came into the world in order to pay off the debt owed by him to it, that is to say, in order to serve God and (or through) His creation. Keeping this point of view in front of him, man acts as a guardian of his body. It becomes his duty to take such care of his body as to enable it to practise the ideal of service to the best of its ability.

## AIR

No one can live without air as one can without water for a few days and without food much longer. Therefore, nature has surrounded us with air on all sides so that we can get it without any effort

We take in air through the nose into our lungs. The lungs act as a sort of bellows. The atmospheric air which we breathe in has a life-giving substance—a gas known as oxygen. The air that we breathe out contains poisonous gases. These can kill us if they are not immediately allowed to spread out and get diluted by the atmospheric air. Hence the necessity of proper ventilation.

The air comes into close contact with blood in the lungs and purifies it. Many people do not know the art of breathing. This defect prevents an adequate purification of their blood. Some people breathe through the mouth instead of through the nose. This is a bad habit. Nature has so designed the nose that it acts as a sort of filter for the ingoing air and also warms it. In mouth breathers the atmospheric air reaches the lungs without the preliminary filtration or warming. It follows therefore that those who do not know how to breathe should take breathing exercises. They are as easy to learn as they are useful. I do not wish to go into a discussion of the various *asanas* or postures. I do not mean to say that these are not

important or useful. But I do wish to emphasize that a well-regulated life outweighs the advantage of studying and practising elaborate postures or exercises. Any comfortable posture that ensures breathing through the nose and free chest expansion is enough for our purpose.

If we keep the mouth tightly closed, the breathing will have to be carried out by the nose. Just as we wash our mouth every morning, the nose should also be cleaned. Clean water, cold or lukewarm is the best agent for that purpose. It should be taken in a cup or in the palm of the hand and drawn up through the nostrils. It is possible to draw the water up through one nostril, the other remaining closed, and expel it through the other by opening it and closing the former. The process should be carried out gently so as to avoid discomfort. In order to cleanse the back portion of the nose known as nasopharynx, water should be brought out by the mouth or even swallowed.

We must see that the air that we breathe in is fresh. It is good to cultivate the habit of sleeping in the open under the stars. The fear of catching a chill should be dismissed from the mind. Cold can be kept out by plenty of covering. This covering should not extend beyond the neck. If cold is felt on the head, it can be covered with a separate piece of cloth. The opening of the respiratory passage—the nose—should never be covered up.

The day clothes should be changed for loose night clothes before retiring. As a matter of fact no clothes

are necessary at night when one sleeps covered with a sheet. Tight-fitting clothes should be avoided even during the day.

The atmospheric air around us is not always pure, neither is it the same in every country. The choice of the country does not always lie in our hands but the choice of a suitable house in a suitable locality does rest with us to some extent. The general rule should be to live in a locality which is not too congested and insist upon the house being well-lighted and well-ventilated.

## 3

## WATER

Next to air, water is a necessity of life. We cannot live without it for more than a few days, just as without air we cannot live for more than a few minutes. Therefore, as in the case of air, nature has provided us with ample amount of water. Man cannot live on barren land where there is no water. Vast tracts of desert land lie utterly uninhabited.

In order to keep healthy, everyone should take 5 lbs of water or other liquid food in 24 hours. Drinking water must be pure. In many places it is difficult to get pure water. There is always risk in drinking well water. The water of shallow wells, and even deep wells with a staircase leading down to the water level, should be considered absolutely unfit for drinking purposes. The difficulty is that the appearance

and even the taste of water are no guide to its purity. Water which appears perfectly harmless to look at and to taste, can act as poison. The old custom of not drinking from an unknown well or from a stranger's house is worth copying.

In Bengal almost every house has a *kachcha* tank attached to it. As a rule the water of these is unfit for drinking purposes. River water also is frequently not fit for drinking, particularly where the river is used for navigation or where it passes by a big city and receives its drainage and sewage water.

In spite of what I have said, I know there are millions of people who have to drink what I have described as impure water. But that does not mean that their example is worthy of being copied. Nature has provided us with sufficient reserve of vitality. But for that, man would have long ago disappeared from the face of the earth because of his own mistakes and transgressions of the rules of health.

Here we are concerned merely with the role of water with regard to health. Wherever we are doubtful about the purity of water, it should be boiled before drinking. In practice it amounts to this that everyone should carry his drinking water with him. Many orthodox Hindus in India do not drink water whilst travelling on account of religious prejudices. Surely, the enlightened can do for the sake of health what the unenlightened do in the name of religion!

## FOOD

Whilst it is true that man cannot live without air and water, the thing that nourishes the body is food. Hence the saying, food is life.

Food can be divided into three categories: vegetarian, flesh and mixed. Flesh foods include fowl and fish. Milk is an animal product and cannot by any means be included in a strictly vegetarian diet. It serves the purpose of meat to a very large extent. In medical language it is classified as animal food. A layman does not consider milk to be animal food. On the other hand, eggs are regarded by the layman as a flesh food. In reality, they are not. Nowadays sterile eggs are also produced. The hen is not allowed to see the cock and yet it lays eggs. A sterile egg never develops into a chick. Therefore, he who can take milk should have no objection to taking sterile eggs.

Medical opinion is mostly in favour of a mixed diet, although there is a growing school, which is strongly of the opinion that anatomical and physiological evidence is in favour of man being a vegetarian. His teeth, his stomach, intestines, etc., seem to prove that nature has meant man to be a vegetarian.

Vegetarian diet, besides grains, pulses, edible roots, tubers and leaves, includes fruits, both fresh and dry. Dry fruit includes nuts like almonds, pistachio, walnut, etc.



I have always been in favour of pure vegetarian diet. But experience has taught me that in order to keep perfectly fit, vegetarian diet must include milk and milk products such as curds, butter, *ghee*, etc. This is a significant departure from my original idea. I excluded milk from my diet for six years. At that time, I felt none the worse for the denial. But in the year 1917, as a result of my own ignorance, I was laid down with severe dysentery. I was reduced to a skeleton, but I stubbornly refused to take any medicine and with equal stubbornness refused to take milk or buttermilk. But I could not build up my body and pick up sufficient strength to leave the bed. I had taken a vow of not taking milk. A medical friend suggested that at the time of taking the vow, I could have had in mind only the milk of the cow and buffalo, why should the vow prevent me from taking goat's milk? My wife supported him and I yielded. Really speaking, for one who has given up milk, though at the time of taking the vow only the cow and the buffalo were in mind, milk should be taboo. All animal milks have practically the same composition, though the proportion of the components varies in each case. So I may be said to have kept merely the letter, not the spirit, of the vow. Be that as it may, goat's milk was produced immediately and I drank it. It seemed to bring me new life. I picked up rapidly and was soon able to leave the bed. On account of this and several similar experiences, I have been forced to admit the necessity of adding

milk to the strict vegetarian diet But I am convinced that in the vast vegetable kingdom there must be some kind, which, while supplying those necessary substances which we derive from milk and meat, is free from their drawbacks, ethical and other.

In my opinion there are definite drawbacks in taking milk or meat. In order to get meat we have to kill And we are certainly not entitled to any other milk except the mother's milk in our infancy. Over and above the moral drawback, there are others, purely from the point of view of health Both milk and meat bring with them the defects of the animal from which they are derived. Domesticated cattle are hardly ever perfectly healthy Just like man, cattle suffer from innumerable diseases Several of these are over-looked even when the cattle are subjected to periodical medical examinations Besides, medical examination of all the cattle in India seems to be an impossible feat, at any rate for the present I am conducting a dairy at the Sevagram Ashram I can easily get help from medical friends Yet I cannot say with certainty that all the cattle in the Sevagram Dairy are healthy On the contrary, a cow that had been considered to be healthy by everybody was found to be suffering from tuberculosis Before this diagnosis was made, the milk of that cow had been used regularly in the Ashram The Ashram also takes milk from the farmers in the neighbourhood Their cattle have not been medically examined. It is difficult to determine whether a particular specimen

of milk is safe for consumption or not. We have to rest content with as much safety as boiling of the milk can assure us of. If the Ashram cannot boast of fool-proof medical examination of its cattle, and be certain of the safety of its dairy products, the situation elsewhere is not likely to be much better. What applies to the milch cattle applies to a much greater extent to the animals slaughtered for meat. As a general rule, man just depends upon luck to escape from such risks. He does not seem to worry much about his health. He considers himself to be quite safe in his medical fortress in the shape of doctors, *vaid*s and *hakims*. His main worry and concern is how to get wealth and position in society. This worry overshadows all the rest. Therefore, so long as some selfless scientist does not, as a result of patient research work, discover a vegetable substitute for milk and meat, man will go on taking meat and milk.

Now let us consider mixed diet. Man requires food which can supply tissue building substances to provide for the growth and daily wear and tear of the body. It should also contain something which can supply energy, fat, certain salts and roughage to help the excretion of waste matter. Tissue building substances are known as proteins. They are obtained from milk, meat, eggs, pulses and nuts. The proteins contained in milk and meat, in other words, the animal proteins being more easily digestible and assimilable, are much more valuable than vegetable proteins. Milk is superior to meat. The medicos tell us that in

cases where meat cannot be digested, milk is digested quite easily. For vegetarians milk being the only source of animal proteins, is a very important article of diet. The proteins in raw eggs are considered to be the most easily digestible of all proteins.

But everybody cannot afford to drink milk. And milk is not available in every place. I would like to mention here a very important fact with regard to milk. Contrary to the popular belief, skimmed milk is a very valuable article of diet. There are times when it proves even more useful than whole milk. The chief function of milk is to supply animal proteins for tissue building and tissue repair. Skimming while it partially removes the fats, does not affect the proteins at all. Moreover, the available skimming instruments cannot remove all the fat from milk. Neither is there any likelihood of such an instrument being constructed.

The body requires other things besides milk, whole or skimmed. I give the second place to cereals—wheat, rice, *juwar*, *bajri* etc. These are used as the staple diet. Different cereals are used as staple in different provinces of India. In many places, more than one kind of cereals are eaten at the same time, for instance, small quantities of wheat, *bajri* and rice are often served together. This mixture is not necessary for the nourishment of the body. It makes it difficult to regulate the quantity of food intake, and puts an extra strain upon digestion. As all these varieties supply starch mainly, it is better to take one only,

at a time. Wheat may well be described as the king among the cereals. If we glance at the world map, we find that wheat occupies the first place. From the point of view of health, if we can get wheat, rice and other cereals become unnecessary. If wheat is not available and *juwar*, etc. cannot be taken on account of dislike or difficulty in digesting them, rice has to be resorted to.

The cereals should be properly cleansed, ground on a grinding stone, and the resulting flour used as it is. Seiving of the flour should be avoided. It is likely to remove the *bhusi* or the pericarp which is a rich source of salts and vitamins, both of which are most valuable from the point of view of nutrition. The pericarp also supplies roughage, which helps the action of the bowels. Rice grain being very delicate, nature has provided it with an outer covering or epicarp. This is not edible. In order to remove this inedible portion, rice has to be pounded. Pounding should be just sufficient to remove the epicarp on the outer skin of the rice grain. But machine pounding not only removes the outer skin, but also polishes the rice by removing its pericarp. The explanation of the popularity of polished rice lies in the fact that polishing helps preservation. The pericarp is very sweet and unless it is removed, rice is easily attacked by certain organisms. Polished rice and wheat without its pericarp, supply us with almost pure starch. Important constituents of the cereals are lost with the removal of the pericarp. The pericarp of rice is sold

as rice polishings. This and the pericarp of wheat can be cooked and eaten by themselves. They can be also made into *chapatis* or cakes. It is possible that rice *chapatis* may be more easily digestible than whole rice and in this form a lesser quantity may result in full satisfaction.

We are in the habit of dipping each morsel of the *chapati* in vegetable or *dal* gravy before eating it. The result is that most people swallow their food without proper mastication. Mastication is an important step in the process of digestion, especially that of starch. Digestion of starch begins on its coming into contact with saliva in the mouth. Mastication ensures a thorough mixing of food with saliva. Therefore, starchy foods should be eaten in a relatively dry form, which results in a greater flow of saliva and also necessitates their thorough mastication.

After the starch supplying cereals come the protein supplying pulses—beans, lentils etc. Almost everybody seems to think that pulses are an essential constituent of diet. Even meat eaters must have pulses. It is easy to understand that those who have to do hard manual work and who cannot afford to drink milk, cannot do without pulses. But I can say without any hesitation whatsoever that those who follow sedentary occupations as for instance, clerks, businessmen, lawyers, doctors, teachers and those who are not too poor to buy milk, do not require pulses. Pulses are generally considered to be difficult to digest and are eaten in a much smaller quantity than cereals. Out

of the varieties of pulses, peas, gram and haricot beans are considered to be the most and *mung* and *masoor* (lentils) the least difficult to digest.

Vegetables and fruits should come third on our list. One would expect them to be cheap and easily available in India. But it is not so. They are generally considered to be delicacies meant for the city people. In the villages fresh vegetables are a rarity, and in most places fruit is also not available. This shortage of greens and fruits is a slur on the administration of India. The villagers can grow plenty of green vegetables if they wish to. The question of fruit cannot be solved so easily. The land legislation is bad from the villager's standpoint. But I am transgressing.

Among fresh vegetables, a fair amount of leafy vegetables must be taken every day. I do not include potatoes, sweet potatoes, *suran*, etc, which supply starch mainly, among vegetables. They should be put down in the same category as starch supplying cereals. A fair helping of ordinary fresh vegetables is advisable. Certain varieties such as cucumber, tomatoes, mustard and cress and other tender leaves need not be cooked. They should be washed properly and then eaten raw in small quantities.

As for fruits, our daily diet should include the available fruits of the season, e.g. mangoes, *jambu*, guavas, grapes, *papayas*, limes—sweet or sour, oranges, *moosambi*, etc. should all be used in their season. The best time for taking fruit is in the early morning. A breakfast of fruit and milk should give full

satisfaction Those who take an early lunch may well have a breakfast of fruit only

Banana is a good fruit. But as it is very rich in starch, it takes the place of bread Milk and banana make a perfect meal.

A certain amount of fat is also necessary. This can be had in the form of *ghee* or oil If *ghee* can be had, oil becomes unnecessary It is difficult to digest and is not so nourishing as pure *ghee* An ounce and a half of *ghee* per head per day, should be considered ample to supply the needs of the body Whole milk also is a source of *ghee* Those who cannot afford it should take enough oil to supply the need for fat Among oils, sweet oil, groundnut oil and cocoa-nut oil should be given preference Oil must be fresh If available, it is better to use hand-pressed oil Oil and *ghee* sold in the bazaar are generally quite useless. It is a matter of great sorrow and shame But so long as honesty has not become an integral part of business morals, whether through legislation or through education, the individual will have to procure the pure article with patience and diligence. One should never be satisfied to take what one can get, irrespective of its quality It is far better to do without *ghee* and oil altogether than to eat rancid oil and adulterated *ghee* As in the case of fats, a certain amount of sugar is also necessary. Although sweet fruits supply plenty of sugar, there is no harm in taking one to one and a half ounces of sugar, brown or white, in the day. If one cannot get sweet fruits, sugar may become a



necessity. But the undue prominence given to sweet things nowadays is wrong. City folk eat too much of sweet things. Milk puddings, milk sweets and sweets of other kinds are consumed in large quantities. They are all unnecessary and are harmful except when taken in very small quantities. It may be said without any fear of exaggeration that to partake of sweetmeats and other delicacies, in a country where the millions do not even get an ordinary full meal, is equivalent to robbery.

What applies to sweets, applies with equal force to *ghee* and oil. There is no need to eat food fried in *ghee* or oil To use up *ghee* in making *puris* and *laddus* is thoughtless extravagance Those who are not used to such food cannot eat these things at all. For instance, Englishmen on their first coming into our country cannot eat our sweets and fried foodstuffs. Those that do eat them I have often seen fall ill Taste is acquired, not born with us All the delicacies of the world cannot equal the relish that hunger gives to food. A hungry man will eat a dry piece of bread with the greatest relish, whereas one who is not hungry will refuse the best of sweetmeats.

Now let us consider how often and how much should one eat Food should be taken as a matter of duty—even as a medicine—to sustain the body, never for the satisfaction of the palate Thus, pleasurable feeling comes from satisfaction of real hunger. Therefore, we can say that relish is dependent upon hunger and not outside it. Because of our wrong

habits and artificial way of living, very few people know what their system requires. Our parents who bring us into this world do not, as a rule, cultivate self-control. Their habits and their way of living influence the children to a certain extent. The mother's food during pregnancy is bound to affect the child. After that during childhood, the mother pampers the child with all sorts of tasty foods. She gives the child a little bit out of whatever she herself may be eating and the child's digestive system gets a wrong training from its infancy. Habits once formed are difficult to shed. There are very few who succeed in getting rid of them. But when the realization comes to man that he is his own bodyguard, and his body has been dedicated to service, he desires to learn laws of keeping his body in a fit condition and tries hard to follow them.

We have now reached a point when we can lay down the amount of various foods required by a man of sedentary habits, which most men and women who will read these pages, are.

Cow's milk	2 lbs
Cereals	6 oz.
(wheat, rice, <i>bajra</i> , in all)	
Vegetables leafy	3 oz.
„ others	5 oz.
„ raw	1 oz.
Ghee	1½ oz.
or Butter	2 oz.
Gur or white sugar	1½ oz.

Fresh fruit according to one's taste and purse. In any case it is good to take two sour limes a day. The juice should be squeezed and taken with vegetables or in water, cold or hot. All these weights are of raw stuff. I have not put down the amount of salt. It should be added afterwards according to taste.

Now, how often should one eat? Many people take two meals a day. The general rule is to take three meals. breakfast early in the morning and before going out to work, dinner at midday and supper in the evening or later. There is no necessity to have more than three meals. In the cities some people keep on nibbling from time to time. This habit is harmful. The digestive apparatus requires rest.

## 5

## CONDIMENTS

I have not said anything about condiments in the last chapter. Common salt may be rightly counted as the king among condiments. Many people cannot eat their food without it. The body requires certain salts and common salt is one of them. These salts occur naturally in the various foodstuffs but when food is cooked in an unscientific way, e.g. throwing away the water in which rice, potatoes or other vegetables have been boiled, the supply becomes inadequate. The deficiency then has to be made up by a separate addition of salts. As common salt is one of

the most essential salts for the body, I have said in the last chapter that it might be supplemented in small quantities

But several condiments are not required by the body as a general rule, e g , chillies fresh or dry, pepper, turmeric, coriander, caraway, mustard, *methu*, *asafoetida*, etc These are taken just for the satisfaction of the palate My opinion, based on my personal experience of fifty years, is that not one of these is needed to keep perfectly healthy Those whose digestion has become very feeble might take these things as medicines for a certain length of time, if considered necessary But one should make it a point to avoid their use for the satisfaction of the palate All condiments, even salt, destroy the natural flavour of vegetables and cereals etc Those whose palate has not become vitiated enjoy the natural flavour of the food-stuffs much more than after the addition of salt or other condiments That is why I have said that salt should be taken when necessary as an adjunct As for chillies, they burn the mouth and irritate the stomach Those who are not in the habit of taking chillies cannot bear them in the beginning I have seen several cases of sore mouth caused by the taking of chillies I know of one case who was very fond of chillies, and an excessive use resulted in his premature death The Negro in South Africa will not touch condiments He cannot bear the colour of turmeric in his food In the same way, Englishmen also do not readily take to our condiments

## TEA, COFFEE AND COCOA

None of these is required by the body. The use of tea is said to have originated in China. It has a special use in that country. As a rule one cannot rely on the purity of drinking water in China and therefore it must be boiled before use to ensure safety. Some clever Chinaman discovered a grass called tea which when added to boiling water in a very small quantity gave it a golden colour. The colour did not appear unless the water was really boiling. Thus the grass became an infallible test for seeing when a given quantity of water was boiled. The way, the test is used, is to put the tea leaves in a strainer and let the boiling water pass through the strainer. If the water is boiling it will assume a golden colour. Another quality of tea leaves is said to be that they impart a delicate flavour to the water.

Tea prepared as above is harmless. But the tea that is generally prepared and taken has not only nothing to recommend it, it is actually harmful. The leaves contain tannin which is harmful to the body. Tannin is generally used in the tanneries to harden leather. When taken internally it produces a similar effect upon the mucous lining of the stomach and intestine. This impairs digestion and causes dyspepsia. It is said that in England innumerable women suffer from various ailments on account of their habit of

drinking tea which contains tannin. Habitual tea drinkers begin to feel restless if they do not get their cup at the usual time. In my opinion, the usefulness of tea, if any, consists in the fact that it supplies a warm sweet drink which contains some milk. The same purpose may well be served by taking boiled hot water mixed with a little milk and sugar.

What I have said about tea applies more or less to coffee also. There is a popular saying about coffee in Hindustan which says, "Coffee allays cough and relieves flatulence, but it impairs physical and sexual vigour and makes the blood watery, so that there are three disadvantages against its two advantages." I do not know how far the saying is justified.

I hold similar opinion with regard to cocoa. Those whose digestion works normally, do not require the help of tea, coffee or cocoa. A healthy man can get all the satisfaction that he needs out of ordinary food. I have freely partaken of all the three. I used to suffer from one ailment or another while I was using them. By giving them up I have lost nothing, and have benefited a good deal. I can get the same satisfaction from a clear vegetable soup that I used to derive from tea etc. Hot water, honey and lemon make a healthy nourishing drink, which can well substitute tea or coffee.

## INTOXICANTS

The intoxicants used in India might be taken as the following alcohol, *bhang*, *ganja*, tobacco and opium. Alcohol or liquor includes the country-made liquor and *arak*, besides the large quantities of liquor imported from foreign countries. All these should be strictly prohibited. Alcohol makes a man forget himself and while its effects last, he becomes utterly incapable of doing anything useful. Those who take to drinking, ruin themselves and ruin their people. They lose all sense of decency and propriety.

There is a school who favour limited and regulated consumption of alcohol and believe it to be useful. I have not found any weight in their argument. Even if we accept their view for a moment, we have still to face the fact that innumerable human beings cannot be kept under discipline. Therefore it becomes our duty to prohibit alcoholic drinks even if it were only for the sake of this vast majority.

Parsis have strongly supported the use of *tadi*. They say that although *tadi* is an intoxicant it is also a food and even helps to digest other foodstuffs. I have carefully examined this argument and have read a fair amount of literature pertaining to this subject. But I have been a witness of the terrible straits to which *tadi* reduces the poor and therefore I have come to the conclusion that it can have no place in man's food.

The advantages, attributed to *tadi*, are all available from other foodstuffs. *Tadi* is made out of *khajuri* juice. Fresh *khajuri* juice is not an intoxicant. It is known as *nira* in Hindustani and many people have been cured of their constipation as a result of drinking *nira*. I have taken it myself though it did not act as a laxative with me. I found that it had the same food value as sugar-cane juice. If one drinks a glass of *nira* in the morning instead of drinking tea, etc., he should not need anything else for breakfast. As in the case of sugar-cane juice, palm juice can be boiled to make palm jaggery. *Khajuri* is a variety of palm tree. Several varieties of palm grow spontaneously in our country. All of them yield drinkable juice. As *nira* gets fermented very quickly, it has to be used up immediately and therefore on the spot. Since this condition is difficult to fulfil except to a limited extent, in practice, the best use of *nira* is to convert it into palm jaggery. Palm jaggery can well replace sugar-cane jaggery. In fact some people prefer it to the latter. One advantage of palm jaggery over sugar-cane jaggery is that it is less sweet and therefore one can eat more of it. The All India Village Industries Association has done a great deal to popularize palm jaggery, but much remains to be done. If the palms that are used for making *tadi* are used for making jaggery, India will never lack sugar and the poor will be able to get good jaggery for very little money. Palm jaggery can be converted into molasses and refined sugar. But the jaggery is much more



useful than refined sugar. The salts present in the jaggery are lost in the process of refining. Just as refined wheat flour and polished rice lose some of their nutritive value because of the loss of the pericarp, refined sugar also loses some of the nutritive value of the jaggery. One may generalize that all foodstuffs are richer if taken in their natural state as far as possible.

Talking of *tadi* I naturally began to talk of *nira* and from that I went on to the topic of jaggery. But let us return to liquor for the moment.

None of the public workers perhaps have the same bitter experience of the evils of drinks as I have had. In South Africa, most of the Indians going there as indentured labourers were addicted to drinking. The law there did not in my time permit Indians to take liquor to their houses except under a medical certificate. They could go to the drinking booths and drink as much as they liked. Even the women had fallen victims to this evil habit. I have seen them in a most pathetic condition. One who has seen those scenes near the public bars will never support drinking.

African Negroes were not given to drinking originally. Liquor may be said to have simply ruined them. Large numbers of Negro labourers are seen to waste all their earnings in drinking so that their lives become devoid of any grace.

And what about Englishmen? I have seen respectable Englishmen falling in the gutter under the

effect of alcohol There is no exaggeration in this statement. During the war many Englishmen had to leave the Transvaal Some of them were taken in my home One of them was an engineer and a good man in every way, when not under the effects of alcohol. He was a theosophist Unfortunately, he was addicted to drink and lost all control over himself when he was drunk. He tried hard to give up the habit, but as far as I know he never succeeded

On my return from South Africa to India I had a similar painful experience of the evils of drink. Several Princes have been and are being ruined by liquor What applies to them applies more or less to many a rich youth The condition of labour as a result of taking alcohol is also pitiable That, as a result of such bitter experiences, I have become a staunch opponent of alcohol, will not surprise the readers

In a nutshell, alcohol ruins one physically, morally, intellectually and economically

## OPIUM

The criticism levelled against alcohol applies equally to opium, although the two are very different in their action. Under the effects of alcohol a person becomes a rowdy, whereas opium makes the addict dull and lazy. He becomes even drowsy and incapable of doing anything useful. The evil effects of alcohol strike the eye every day, but those of opium are not so glaring. Any one wishing to see its devastating effect should go to Assam or Orissa. Thousands have fallen victims to this intoxicant, in those provinces. They give one the impression of living on the verge of death.

But China is said to have suffered the most from the evils of opium. The Chinese possess a better physique than the Indians. But the Chinese addicted to opium look miserable and more dead than alive. An opium addict will stoop to anything in order to procure his dose of opium.

Several years ago, what is known as the Opium War took place between China and Great Britain. China did not wish to buy opium from India. But the English wanted to impose it on China. India was also to blame in that several Indians had taken opium contracts in India. The trade paid well and the treasury received crores of rupees as opium revenue. This was obviously an immoral trade and yet it went

on flourishing Finally, as a result of a mighty agitation in England, it was stopped A thing of this type, which simply ruins people, should not be tolerated for a single minute

After having had my say on opium as an intoxicant, I must admit that its place in *Materia Medica* is incontestable It is impossible to do without this drug as a medical agent But that can be no reason for using it as an intoxicant Opium is a well-known poison and its use as an intoxicant should be strictly prohibited

## 9

## TOBACCO

Tobacco has simply worked havoc among mankind Once caught in its tangle, it is rare to find anyone get out again The use of tobacco is prevalent all over the world in one form or another. Tolstoy has called it the worst of all intoxicants This verdict of that great man should command our attention and respect He had freely indulged in the use of tobacco and alcohol in his early days and was familiar with the harmful effects of both I must admit, however, that in spite of this, I cannot talk about the evils of tobacco with the same authority and knowledge as in the case of alcohol and opium But I can certainly say that I am not aware of a single advantage accruing from the use of tobacco Smoking is an expensive habit I know of an Englishman who used to spend

five pounds, i.e., seventy-five rupees on tobacco every month. His monthly earnings were twenty-five pounds, so that he smoked away one-fifth of his monthly income!

Tobacco smokers become callous and careless of others' feelings. Non-smokers generally cannot bear the smell of tobacco smoke, but one often comes across people in railway trains and tramways who just go on smoking, heedless of the feelings of their neighbours. Smoking causes salivation and most smokers have no hesitation in spitting anywhere.

Tobacco smokers' mouths emit a foul smell. Probably tobacco kills the finer feelings and perhaps it is to this end that men take to smoking. There is no doubt that tobacco is an intoxicant and while under its effect one forgets one's worries and misfortunes. One of Tolstoy's characters had to do a ghastly deed. Tolstoy makes him drink liquor at first. The man was to murder someone. In spite of the effects of liquor, he hesitated to do so. Lost in thought he lights a cigar and begins to smoke. As he watched the smoke curling up he exclaimed, "What a coward I am! When it is my duty to commit this murder, why should I hesitate to do so? Get up, go ahead, and do your job." Thus his wavering mind finally decided to commit it. I know, this argument is not very convincing. All smokers are not bad men. I know that millions of smokers seem to live ordinary straightforward lives. All the same the thoughtful should ponder over the above quotation. What Tolstoy per-

haps means is that the smoker keeps on committing minor crimes which generally pass unnoticed

In India people use tobacco for smoking, snuffing and also for chewing. Some believe that snuff produces a beneficial effect, and they use it under the advice of *vaid*s and *hakims*. I think that it is not necessary. A healthy man should never have such requirements.

As for chewing tobacco, it is the dirtiest of the three ways in which tobacco is used. I have always maintained that its usefulness is a mere figment of the imagination. I have found no reason to change my opinion. There is a popular saying in Gujarati which says, all the three are equally guilty: the smoker fills his house with smoke, the chewer dirties every corner and the snuffer his clothes.

Tobacco chewers, if they are sensible, keep a spittoon at hand. But the vast majority spit on the floor, in the corners and on the walls unabashed. The smoker fills his house with the smoke and runs the risk of its catching fire, and he who takes snuff soils his clothes. If there are any who keep handkerchiefs and thus save their clothes from soiling, they are exceptions that prove the general rule. Lovers of (or seekers after) health, if they are slaves to any of these evil habits, will resolutely get out of the slavery. Several people are addicted to one, two or all the three of these habits. They do not appear loathsome to them. But if we think over it calmly, there is nothing becoming about blowing off smoke or keeping

the mouth stuffed with tobacco and *pan* practically the whole day long or opening the snuffbox and taking snuff every now and then. All the three are most dirty habits.

## 10

## BRAHMACHARYA

*Brahmacharya* literally means that mode of life which leads to the realization of God. That realization is impossible without practising self-restraint. Self-restraint means restraint of all the senses. But ordinarily *brahmacharya* is understood to mean control over the sexual organs and prevention of seminal discharge through complete control over the sexual instinct and the sexual organs. This becomes natural for the man who exercises self-restraint all round. It is only when observance of *brahmacharya* becomes natural to one that he or she derives the greatest benefit from it. Such a person should be free from anger and kindred passions. The so-called *brahmacharis*, that one generally comes across, behave as if their one occupation in life was the display of bad temper.

One notices that these people disregard the ordinary rules of *brahmacharya* and merely aim at and expect to prevent seminal discharges. They fail to achieve their object. Some of them become almost insane while others betray a sickly appearance. They are unable to prevent the discharge and if they succeed in restraining themselves from sexual intercourse,

they think they have attained all that was needed. Now mere abstention from sexual intercourse cannot be termed *brahmacharya*. So long as the desire for intercourse is there, one *cannot* be said to have attained *brahmacharya*. Only he who has burnt away the sexual desire in its entirety may be said to have attained control over his sexual organ. The absence of seminal discharges is a straightforward result of *brahmacharya*, but it is not all. There is something very striking about a full-fledged *brahmachari*. His speech, his thought, and his actions, all bespeak possession of vital force.

Such a *brahmachari* does not flee from the company of women. He may not hanker after it nor may he avoid it even when it means rendering of necessary service. For him the distinction between men and women almost disappears. No one should distort my words to use them as an argument in favour of licentiousness. What I mean to say is that, a man whose sexual desire has been burnt up ceases to make a distinction between men and women. It must be so. His conception of beauty alters. He will not look at the external form. He or she whose character is beautiful will be beautiful in his eyes. Therefore, the sight of a woman called beautiful will not ruffle or excite him. Even his sexual organs will begin to look different. In other words, such a man has so controlled his sexual instinct that he never gets erections. He does not become impotent for lack of the necessary secretions of sexual glands.



But these secretions in his case are sublimated into a vital force pervading his whole being. It is said that an impotent man is not free from the sexual desire. Some of my correspondents belonging to this group tell me that they desire erection but they fail to get it and yet have seminal discharges. Such men have either become impotent or are on the way to become so for loss of the necessary secretions. This is a pitiable state. But the cultivated impotency of the man, whose sexual desire has been burnt up and whose sexual secretions are being converted into vital force, is wholly different. It is to be desired by everybody. It is true that such a *brahmachari* is rare to find.

I took the vow of *brahmacharya* in 1906. In other words, my effort to become a perfect *brahmachari* started 36 years ago. I cannot say I have attained the full *brahmacharya* of my definition, but in my opinion I have made substantial progress towards it. If God wills it, I might attain even perfection in this life. Anyway, there is no relaxation of effort nor is there any despondence in me. I do not consider thirty-six years too long a period for the effort. The richer the prize, the richer must the effort be. Meanwhile, my ideas regarding the necessity for *brahmacharya* have become stronger. Some of my experiments have not reached a stage when they might be placed before the public with advantage. I hope to do so some day if they succeed to my satisfaction. Success might make the attainment of *brahmacharya* comparatively easier.

But the *brahmacharya* on which I wish to lay em-

phasis in this chapter is limited to the conservation of sexual secretions. The glorious fruit of perfect *brahmacharya* is not to be had from the observance of this limited *brahmacharya*. But no one can reach perfect *brahmacharya* without reaching the limited variety.

And maintenance of perfect health should be considered almost an utter impossibility without the *brahmacharya* leading to the conservation of the sexual secretions. To countenance wastage of a secretion which has the power of creating another human being is, to say the least, an indication of gross ignorance. A firm grasp of the fact that semen is meant to be used only for procreation and not for self-indulgence, leaves no room whatsoever for indulging in animal passion. Assimilation of the knowledge that the vital fluid is never meant for waste should restrain men and women from becoming crazy over sexual intercourse. Marriage will then come to have a different significance and the way it is treated at present will appear disgusting. Marriage ought to signify a union of hearts between the two partners. A married couple is worthy of being considered *brahmacharis* if they never think of sexual intercourse except for the purposes of procreation. Such an intercourse is not possible unless both parties desire it. It will never be resorted to in order to satisfy passion without the desire for a child. After intercourse which has been performed as a matter of duty, the desire to repeat the process should never arise.

What I am saying may not be taken as copy book

wisdom. The reader should know that I am writing this after a long personal experience. I know that what I am writing is contrary to the common practice. But in order to make progress we have often to go beyond the limits of common experience. Great discoveries have been possible only as a result of challenging the common experience or commonly held beliefs. The invention of the simple match stick was a challenge to the common experience and the discovery of electricity confounded all preconceived notions

What is true of physical things is equally true of things spiritual. In the early days there was no such thing as marriage. Men and women, as in the case of animals, mated promiscuously. Self-restraint was unknown. Some advanced men went beyond the rut of common practice and discovered the law of self-restraint. It is our duty to investigate the hidden possibilities of the law of self-restraint. Therefore, when I say it is the duty of every man and woman to take the marital relations to the state indicated by me it is not to be dismissed as utterly impracticable. If human life is moulded as it ought to be, conservation of the vital fluid can become a natural thing for everyone.

The sexual glands are all the time secreting the semen. This secretion should be utilized for enhancing one's mental, physical and spiritual energy. He, who would learn to utilize it thus, will find that he requires very little food to keep his body in a fit

condition. And yet he will be as capable as any of undertaking physical labour. Mental exertion will not tire him easily nor will he show the ordinary signs of old age. Just as a ripe fruit or an old leaf falls off naturally, so will such a *brahmachari* when his time comes pass away with all his faculties intact. Although with the passage of time the effects of the natural wear and tear must be manifest in his body, his intellect instead of showing signs of decay should show progressive clarity. If all this is correct, the real key to health lies in the conservation of vital energy.

I give here the rules for the conservation of vital force, as I know them.

1. Sexual desire has its root in one's thought. Therefore, complete control over thought is necessary. The way to achieve it is this. Never let your mind remain idle. Keep it filled with good and useful ideas. In other words keep thinking of whatever duty you have on hand. There need be no worry about it, but think out how you can become an expert in your department and then put your thoughts into action. There should be no waste of thought. *Japa* (repetition of God's name) is a great support when idle thoughts haunt you. Contemplate God in the form you have pictured Him unless you know Him as formless. While *japa* is going on, no other thought should be allowed to enter one's mind. This is the ideal state. But if one cannot reach it and all sorts of uninvited thoughts invade one's mind, one should not become disheartened. *Namajapa* should be continued faithfully.

and in the confidence that ultimate victory is bound to follow.

2. As with our thoughts, so with our reading and talking. These should be healthy and clean. Erotic literature should be avoided. Idle, indecent talk leads to indecent action. It is obvious that one who does not wish to feed his animal passions will avoid occupations which tend to induce them.

3. Like the mind, the body must also be kept well and usefully occupied, so that the fatigue of the day may lead to refreshing dreamless sleep. As far as possible, work should be in the open. Those who for some reason or the other, cannot undertake physical labour, should make it a point to take regular exercise. In my opinion, a brisk walk in the open is the best form of exercise. During the walk the mouth should be closed and breathing should be done through the nose. Sitting or walking, the body must be held erect. To sit or stand otherwise is a sign of laziness and laziness is the enemy of self-restraint. Yogic exercises—*asanas*—are also useful. This much I can say from my personal experience that one who keeps his hands and feet, eyes and ears, healthily occupied does not have much difficulty in controlling the animal appetite. Everyone can test this for himself.

4. A Sanskrit text says that a man becomes what he eats. A glutton who exercises no restraint in eating is a slave to his animal passions. One who has not been able to control his palate, will never be able to control the other senses. If this is true, it is clear that

one should take just enough food for the requirements of the body and no more. The diet should be healthy and well-balanced. The body was never meant to be treated as a refuse bin holding the foods that the palate demands. Food is meant to sustain the body. His body has been given to man as a means of self-realization. Self-realization means realization of God. A person who has made this realization the object of his or her life, will never become a slave to the animal passion.

5 Man should look upon every woman as his mother, sister or daughter. No one ever entertains impure thoughts with regard to his mother, sister or daughter. Similarly, woman should look upon every man as her father, brother or son.

I have given more hints than these in my other writings, but they are all contained in the five given above. Anyone who observes them should find it easy to overcome what has been called the greatest of all passions. A person, who has a real desire for *brahmacharya*, will not give up the effort because he or she regards the observance of these rules as impossible or at least within the reach of one in a million. The effort is a joy in itself. To put it in another way, the joy of possessing perfect health is not to be compared with any other, and perfect health is unattainable by slaves. Slavery of one's animality is perhaps the worst of all.

A few words about contraceptives will not be out of place here. The practice of preventing progeny,

by means of artificial methods, is not a new thing. In the past such methods were practised secretly and they were crude. Modern society has given them respectable place and made improvements. They have been given a philanthropic garb. The advocates of contraceptives say that sexual desire is a natural instinct—some call it a blessing. They therefore say that it is not desirable to suppress the desire even if it were possible. Birth control by means of self-restraint is, in their opinion, difficult to practise. If a substitute for self-restraint is not prescribed, the health of innumerable women is bound to suffer through frequent pregnancies. They add that if births are not regulated, over-population will ensue; individual families will be pauperized and their children will be ill fed, ill clothed and ill educated. Therefore, they argue, it is the duty of scientists to devise harmless and effective methods of birth control. This argument has failed to convince me. The use of contraceptives is likely to produce evils of which we have no conception. But the worst danger is that the use of contraceptives bids fair to kill the desire for self-restraint. In my opinion it is too heavy a price to pay for any possible immediate gain. But this is not the place to argue my point. Those who would like to pursue this subject further should procure the booklet called *Self-Restraint v. Self-Indulgence* read and digest what I have said therein and then do as their heads and hearts may dictate. Those who have not the desire or the leisure to read the booklet will, if they follow

my advice, avoid contraceptives as poison. They should try their best to exercise self-restraint. They should take up such activities as would keep their bodies and minds fully occupied and give a suitable outlet to their energy. It is necessary to have some healthy recreation when one is tired by physical labour. There should not be a single moment of idleness for the devil to creep in. In this way, true conjugal love will be established and directed into healthy channels. Both the partners will make a progressive rise in their moral height. The joy of true renunciation, once they come to know it, will prevent them from turning to animal enjoyment. Self-deception is the greatest stumbling block. Instead of controlling the mind, the fountain of all animal desire, men and women involve themselves in the vain endeavour to avoid the physical act. If there is a determination to control the thought and the action, victory is sure to follow. Man must understand that woman is his companion and helpmate in life and not a means of satisfying his carnal desire. There must be a clear perception that the purpose of human creation was wholly different from that of the satisfaction of animal wants.





# KEY TO HEALTH

## PART II

### NATURAL THERAPEUTICS



# I

## EARTH

These chapters are written in order to introduce the reader to this most important branch of therapeutics and tell him how I have made use of these methods in my own life. The subject has been touched upon in the foregoing chapters. It will be dealt with in some detail here. The science of natural therapeutics is based on a use, in the treatment of disease, of the same five elements which constitute the human body. To refresh the reader's memory, these are earth, water, ether, sunlight and air. It is my effort to point out how they can be utilized for health purposes.

Up till the year 1901, although I did not rush to doctors whenever I happened to get ill, I did use their remedies to a certain extent. I used to take fruit-salt for constipation. The late Dr. Pranjivan Mehta who had come to Natal introduced me to certain drugs to remove general lassitude. This led me to read literature on the uses of drugs. Add to this a little more knowledge I gained by a certain amount of work I had put in at a cottage hospital in Natal. This enabled me to carry on for some time, but none of the drugs did me any good in the end. Headaches and loss of a sense of general wellbeing persisted. I was very dissatisfied with this state of things and what little faith I had in medicines began to fade.

All through this interval my experiments in

dietetics were continued. I had great faith in nature cure methods, but there was nobody to help me with practical guidance in their use. With the help of whatever knowledge I could gather by reading a little of nature cure literature, I tried to treat myself by diet regulation. My habit of going out for long walks also stood me in good stead, and thanks to that habit I did not have actually to take to bed. While I was thus managing to keep going somehow, Mr. Polak handed me Just's book, called *Return to Nature*. He did not follow Just's instructions himself, except that he tried to regulate his diet more or less according to Just's teaching. But knowing me as he did, he thought I would like the book. Just lays great emphasis on the use of earth. I felt that I ought to give it a trial. For constipation, Just advises cold mud poultice on the lower abdomen. I made a mud poultice by mixing clean dry earth with water, packed it in a piece of thin cloth and kept it on the abdomen throughout the night. The result was most satisfactory. I had a natural well-formed motion the next morning and from that day onwards I have hardly ever touched fruit-salt. Occasionally, I feel the need of a purgative and take less than a dessert-spoonful of castor oil early in the morning. The mud poultice should be 3 inches broad, 6 inches long and  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch thick. Just claims that mud can cure man bitten by a poisonous snake. He would pack wet earth all round the body. I mention this for what it is worth. I would like to put down here what I have tested and proved for myself. It is

my experience that a mud poultice applied to the head, relieves headache in most cases. I have tried it in hundreds of cases. Headache may be due to several causes, but whatever the cause, as a general rule, an application of mud poultice relieves it for the time being.

Mud poultices cure ordinary boils. I have applied mud to discharging abscesses as well. For these cases I prepare the poultice by packing the mud in a clean piece of cloth dipped in potassium permanganate lotion, and apply it to the abscess after washing clean with permanganate lotion. In the majority of cases this treatment results in complete cure. I do not remember a single case in which it has failed me. Mud application immediately relieves the pain of a wasp sting. I have used it in many cases of scorpion bite, though with much less success. Scorpions have become a nuisance in Sevagram. We have tried all the known treatments for scorpion bite, but none has proved infallible. I can say this that the results of mud application are not inferior to those of any other form of treatment.

In high fever, an application of mud poultice on the head and abdomen is very useful. Although it does not always bring down the temperature, it does invariably soothe the patient and make him feel better, so that the patients themselves ask for these applications. I have used it in several cases of typhoid fever. The fever no doubt runs its own course but mud applications seem to relieve restlessness and

abate the suffering. We have had about ten cases of typhoid fever in Sevagram with complete recovery in every case, so that the inmates of the Ashram are no longer afraid of typhoid fever. I have not used any drugs in the treatment of these cases. I have made use of other nature cure methods besides mud poultices, but about those in their own place.

In Sevagram we have made free use of hot mud poultices as a substitute for antiphlogistine. A little oil and salt is added to the mud and it is heated sufficiently long to ensure sterilization.

I have not told the reader what kind of earth should be used for mud poultices. In the beginning I used to procure sweet smelling clean red earth. It emits a delicate smell when it is mixed with water. But this kind of earth is not easy to obtain. In a city like Bombay it is a problem to get any kind of earth. It is safe to use soft alluvial clay, which is neither gritty nor sticky. One should never use earth taken from manured soil. Earth should be dried, pounded, and passed through a fine sieve. If there is any doubt as to its cleanliness, it should be well heated and thus sterilized. Mud used as a poultice on a clean surface need not be thrown away after use. It can be used again and again after drying it in the sun or on fire and pounding and sieving it. I am not aware that mud poultice made out of the same earth again and again as described above, is any the less efficacious. I have myself used it in this way and did not find it any the less efficacious for repeated use.

Some friends who regularly use mud poultices, tell me that mud from Jumna's banks is particularly good for this purpose.

### EATING EARTH

Just writes that clean earth may be eaten in order to overcome constipation. Five to ten grams is the maximum dose. ¶The rationale is said to be this. Earth is not digested. It acts as roughage and must pass out. The peristalsis thus stimulated pushes out the faecal matter as well. I have not tried it myself. Therefore those who wish to do so, should try it on their own responsibility. I am inclined to think that a trial or two is not likely to harm anyone.

## 2

### WATER

Hydrotherapy is a well-known and ancient form of therapy. Many books have been written on the subject, but in my opinion the form of hydrotherapy suggested by Kuhne is simple and effective. Kuhne's book on nature cure is very popular in India. It has been translated in several languages of India. Andhra has the greatest number of Kuhne's followers. He has written a good deal about diet as well, but here I wish to confine myself to his experiments in hydrotherapy.

Hip bath and sitz bath are the most important of Kuhne's contributions to hydrotherapy. He has devised a special tub for use though one can do without



it. Any tub thirty to thirty-six inches long according to the patient's height generally serves the purpose. Experience will indicate the proper size. The tub should be filled with fresh cold water so that it does not overflow when the patient sits in it. In summer the water may be iced, if it is not cold enough, to give a gentle shock to the patient. Generally, water kept in earthen jars overnight answers the purpose. Water can also be cooled by putting a piece of cloth on the surface of the water and then fanning it vigorously. The tub should be kept against the bathroom wall and a plank put in the tub to serve as back rest. The patient should sit in the tub keeping his feet outside. Portions of the body outside water should be kept well covered so that the patient does not feel cold. After the patient is comfortably seated in the tub, gentle friction should be applied to his abdomen with a soft towel. This bath can be taken for five to thirty minutes. When it is over, the body should be rubbed dry and the patient put to bed.

Hip bath brings down the temperature in high fever and given in the manner described above it never does any harm, and may do much good. It relieves constipation and improves digestion. The patient feels fresh and active after it. In cases of constipation, Kuhne advises a brisk walk for half an hour immediately after the bath. It should never be given on a full stomach.

I have tried hip baths on a fairly large scale. They have proved efficacious in more than 75 cases

out of 100 In cases of hyperpyrexia, if the patient's condition permits of his being seated in the tub, the temperature immediately invariably falls at least by two to three degrees, and the onset of delirium is averted

The rationale of the hip bath according to Kuhne is this Whatever the apparent cause of fever, the real cause in every case is one and the same, i.e accumulation of waste matter in the intestines The heat generated by the putrefaction of this waste matter is manifested in the form of fever and several other ailments Hip bath brings down this internal fever so that fever and other ailments which are the external manifestations thereof subside automatically How far this reasoning is correct, I cannot say It is for experts to do so Although the medical profession have taken up some things from nature cure methods, on the whole they have given a cold shoulder to naturopathy In my opinion both the parties are to be blamed for this state of affairs The medical profession have got into the habit of confining themselves to whatever is included in their own curriculum They present an attitude of indifference, if not that of contempt, for anything that lies outside their groove. On the other hand, the nature curists nurse a feeling of grievance against the medicos and, in spite of their very limited scientific knowledge, they make tall claims They lack the spirit of organization Each one is self-satisfied and works by himself instead of all pooling their resources for the advancement of their

system. No one tries to work out in a scientific spirit all the implications and possibilities of the system. No one tries to cultivate humility, (if it is possible to cultivate humility).

I have not said all this in order to belittle the work of the naturopaths. As a lay co-worker I wish them to see things in their true colour so that they may make improvements wherever possible. It is my conviction that so long as some dynamic personality, from among the naturopaths themselves, does not come forward with the zeal of a missionary, things will continue as they are. Orthodox medicine has its own science, medical unions and teaching institutions. It has too a certain measure of success. The medical profession should not be expected to put faith, all of a sudden, in things which are yet to be fully tested and scientifically proved.

In the meantime the public should know that the speciality of nature cure methods lies in the fact that being natural, they can be safely practised by laymen. If a man, suffering from headache, wets a piece of cloth in cold water and wraps it round his head, it can do no harm. The addition of earth to cold water enhances the utility of the cold pack.

Now about the sitz or friction bath. The organ of reproduction is one of the most sensitive parts of the body. There is something illusive about the sensitiveness of the glans penis and the foreskin. Anyway, I know not how to describe it. Kuhne has made use of this knowledge for therapeutic purposes. He

advises application of gentle friction to the outer end of the external sexual organ by means of a soft wet piece of cloth, while cold water is being poured. In the case of the male the glans penis should be covered with the foreskin before applying friction. The method advised by Kuhne is this. A stool should be placed in a tub of cold water so that the seat is just about the level of water in the tub. The patient should sit on the stool with his feet outside the tub and apply gentle friction to the sexual organ which just touches the surface of the water in the tub. This friction should never cause pain. On the contrary the patient should find it pleasant and feel rested and peaceful at the end of the bath. Whatever the ailment, the sitz bath makes the patient feel better for the time being. Kuhne places sitz baths higher than hip baths. I have had much less experience of the former than of the latter. The blame, I think, lies mostly with myself. I have been lax. Those whom I advised sitz baths, have not been patient with the experiment, so that I cannot express an opinion on the efficacy of these baths, based on personal experience. It is worth a trial by everyone. If there is any difficulty about finding a tub, it is possible to pour water from a jug or a *lota* and take the friction bath. It is bound to make the patient feel rested and peaceful. As a general rule, people pay scant attention to the cleansing of the sexual organ. The friction bath will easily achieve that end. Unless one is particularly careful, dirt accumulates between the foreskin and the glans

penis. This must be removed. Insistence on keeping the sexual organ clean and patiently following the treatment outlined above will make the observance of *brahmacharya* comparatively easier. It will result in making the local nerve endings less sensitive and unwanted seminal emissions less likely. To say the least it is very unclean to allow seminal emissions to occur. Greater insistence on cleanliness should and will cause a feeling of revulsion against the process and make one much more particular than otherwise in taking all the precautions to avoid them.

Having dealt with the two Kuhne baths, a few words about wet sheet packs will not be out of place. It is very useful in pyrexia and insomnia. The method of giving wet sheet packs is this. Spread three or four thick broad woollen blankets on a cot and on top of them a thick cotton sheet dipped in cold water with the water wrung out. The patient lies flat on the wet sheet with his head resting on a pillow outside the sheet. The wet sheet and the blankets are wrapped round the patient covering the whole body except the head which is covered with a damp towel treated after the manner of the wet sheet. The sheet and the blankets are wrapped round the patient, so that outside air cannot get inside. Though the patient feels a gentle shock when first laid in the wet sheet pack, he finds it pleasant afterwards. In a minute or two he begins to feel warm. Unless the fever has become chronic, in about five minutes it begins to come down with sweating. In resistant cases I have kept the

patient wrapped in the wet sheet pack up to half an hour. This has finally resulted in sweating. Sometimes, there is no sweating, but the patient goes off to sleep. In that case he should not be awakened. The sleep indicates that the wet sheet pack has produced a soothing effect and he is quite comfortable. The temperature invariably falls at least by one or two degrees as a result of the wet sheet pack.

It was over thirty years ago that my second son suffered from double pneumonia and high fever resulting in delirium. I had a medical friend advising me as to his condition. I would not, much to his sorrow, try his prescription. But I tried water cure. I used to put him in wet sheet packs when fever shot up very high. After six or seven days the temperature went down. So far as I remember I gave him nothing but water. But it is just possible that I gave him orange juice also, but nothing else. Typhoid supervened. It lasted 42 days. There was no treatment beyond simple nursing. I gave him milk and water for food. He had daily sponges. He was completely cured and is today the strongest and healthiest of all my four sons. At least this much might be said of the treatment that he was none the worse for it.

Wet sheet packs are also useful in the treatment of prickly heat, urticaria, other forms of skin irritation, measles, smallpox etc. I have tried them on a fairly large scale for these ailments. For smallpox and measles cases, I added enough potassium permanganate to the water to give it a light pink colour. The

sheet used for these patients, should afterwards be sterilized by soaking it in boiling water and leaving it in it till it cools down sufficiently and then washed with soap and water.

In cases where circulation has become sluggish, the leg muscles feel sore and there is a peculiar ache and feeling of discomfort in the legs, an ice massage does a lot of good. This treatment is more effective in summer months. Massaging a weak patient with ice in winter might prove a risky affair.

Now a few words about the therapeutics of hot water. An intelligent use of hot water gives relief in many cases. Application of iodine is a very popular remedy for all sorts of injuries and the like. Application of hot water will prove equally effective in most of these cases. Tincture of iodine is applied on swollen and bruised areas. Hot water fomentations are likely to give equal relief, if not more. Again, iodine drops are used in cases of earache. Irrigation of the ear with warm water is likely to relieve the pain in most of these cases. The use of iodine is attended with certain risks. The patient may have allergy towards the drug. Iodine mistaken for something else and taken internally might prove disastrous. But there is no risk whatsoever in using hot water. Boiling water is as good a disinfectant as tincture of iodine. I do not mean to belittle the usefulness of iodine or suggest that hot water can replace it in all cases. Iodine is one of the few drugs which I regard most useful and necessary, but it is an expensive thing. The poor

cannot afford to buy it and moreover its use cannot be safely entrusted to everybody. But water is available everywhere. We may not despise its therapeutic value because it is obtained so easily. Knowledge of common household remedies often proves a godsend in many a crisis.

In cases of scorpion bite where all remedies have failed, immersion of the part in hot water has been found to relieve the pain to a certain extent.

A shivering fit or a rigor can be made to subside by putting buckets of hot boiling water all round the patient who is well wrapped up or by saturating the atmosphere of the room with steam by some other device. A rubber hot water bag is a most useful thing, but it is not to be found in every household. A glass bottle with a well fitting cork, filled with hot water and wrapped in a piece of cloth, serves the same purpose. Care should be taken to choose bottles that will not crack on hot water being poured into them.

Steam is a more valuable therapeutic agent. It can be used to make the patient sweat. Steam baths are most useful in cases of rheumatism and other joint-pains. The easiest as well as the oldest method of taking steam bath is this. Spread a blanket or two on a sparsely but tightly woven cot and put one or two covered vessels full with boiling water under it. Make the patient lie flat on the cot and cover him up in such a way that the ends of the covering blankets touch the ground and thus prevent the steam from escaping and the outside air from getting in.



After arranging everything as above, the lid from the vessels containing boiling water is removed and steam soon gets on to the patient lying between the blankets. It may be necessary to change the water once or twice. Usually in India people keep an *angithi* under the pots to keep the water boiling. This ensures continuous discharge of steam, but is attended with risk of accidents. A single spark might set fire to the blankets or to the cot and endanger the patient's life. Therefore, it is advisable to use the method described by me even though it might seem slow and tedious

Some people add *neem* leaves or other herbs to the water used for generating steam. I do not know if such an addition increases the efficiency of steam. The object is to induce sweat and that is attained by mere steam.

In cases of cold feet or aching of legs, the patient should be made to sit with his feet and legs immersed up to the knees in as hot water as he can bear. A little mustard powder can be added to the water. The foot bath should not last for more than fifteen minutes. This treatment improves the local circulation and gives immediate relief

In cases of common cold and sore throat a steam kettle which is very much like an ordinary tea kettle with a long nozzle can be used for applying steam to the nose or throat. A rubber tube of required length can be attached to any ordinary kettle for this purpose.

## AKASH (ETHER?)

*Akash* is a difficult word to translate as are indeed all the other four elements so called. For *pani* is not mere water in the original, nor *vayu* wind, or *prithvi* earth, or *teja* light. *Akash* is ether least of all. Perhaps the nearest equivalent is emptiness taken in its literal sense. And it is horribly inexpressive of the original. All the five in the original are as living as life. If however we take ether as the nearest equivalent for *akash*, we must say that we know very little about ether itself and *akash* much less. Our knowledge of its therapeutic uses is still more limited. *Akash* might be taken for the empty space surrounding the earth and the atmosphere round it. On a clear day, on looking up, one sees a beautiful mauve blue canopy which is known as the *akash* or sky. So far as we are concerned, this sky or the ether is limitless. We are surrounded by it on every side, and there is no nook or corner without it. Generally we imagine that the sky is something resting upon the high—it is the blue canopy above us. But the sky is as much above us as below and all around us. We move round and round with the earth. Therefore the *akash* is round and everybody is within it. It is an envelope whose outermost surface is measureless. The lower strata of the *akash* for a number of miles are filled with air. But for this man would become

suffocated in spite of the emptiness. True, we cannot see the air, but we can feel it when in motion. Sky or the ether is the abode of the atmosphere. One can pump out air say from an empty bottle and create a vacuum, but who can pump out the vacuum itself? That is *akash*.

This *akash* we have to make use of to maintain or to regain health. Air being most essential to sustain life, nature has made it omnipresent. But the omnipresence of air is only relative. It is not limitless in reality. Scientists tell us that after a certain number of miles above the earth there is no air. It is said that earthly creatures cannot exist outside this atmosphere. This statement may or may not be true. All that we are concerned with here is that *akash* extends beyond the atmosphere. Some day the scientists might prove that what we call ether is also something which fills the empty space—*akash*. Then we will have to discover a new name for the empty space that holds neither air nor the ether. Be that as it may, the mystery of this empty space all round us is most intriguing. We cannot solve it unless we can solve the mystery of God Himself. This much might be said that the more we utilize this great element *akash* the healthier we will be. The first lesson to be learnt is this, that we should not put any partition between ourselves and the sky—the infinite—which is very near and yet very far away. If our bodies could be in contact with the sky without the intervention of houses, roofs and even clothes, we are likely to enjoy

the maximum amount of health. This is not possible for everyone. But all can and should accept the validity of the statement and adapt life accordingly. To the extent that we are able to approach the state in practice, we will enjoy contentment and peace of mind. This train of thought taken to the extreme leads us to a condition where even the body becomes an obstacle separating man from the infinite. To understand this truth is to become indifferent to the dissolution of the body. For to lose oneself in the infinite is to find oneself. The body thus ceases to be a vehicle for self-indulgence. Man will make use of his body for the realization of this unity with the infinite. In the course of the attempt he will discover that he is part of and one with all the life that surrounds him. This must mean service of mankind and through it finding God.

To return from the high flight, this train of thought will make the thinker keep his surroundings as open as possible. He will not fill the house with unnecessary furniture and will use the minimum of clothes that are necessary. Many households are so packed with all sorts of unnecessary decorations and furniture which one can very well do without, that a simple living man will feel suffocated in those surroundings. They are nothing but means of harbouring dust, bacteria and insects. Here in the house where I am under detention, I feel quite lost. The heavy furniture, chairs, tables, sofas, bedsteads, innumerable looking-glasses, all get on my nerves. The expensive carpets

on the floor collect large amount of dust and act as a breeding place for insect life. One day the carpet in one of the rooms was taken out for dusting. It was not one man's work. Six men spent the afternoon in doing the job. They must have removed at least ten pounds of dust. When the carpet was put back in its place it had a new feel about it. These carpets cannot be taken out and dusted everyday. Such treatment will wear out the carpets and greatly increase the expenditure of labour. But this is by the way. What I meant to say is this that my desire to be in tune with the infinite has saved me from many complications in life. It led not merely to simplicity of household and dress but all round simplicity in the mode of my life. In a nutshell, and in the language of the subject under discussion, I have gone on creating more and more contact with *akash*. With the increase in the contact went improvement in health. I had more contentment and peace of mind and the desire for belongings almost disappeared. He who will establish contact with the infinite possesses nothing and yet possesses everything. In the ultimate analysis, man owns that of which he can make legitimate use and which he can assimilate. If everybody followed this rule, there would be room enough for all and there would be neither want nor overcrowding.

It follows that one should make it a point to sleep in the open. Sufficient covering should be used to protect oneself against the inclemencies of the weather—against cold and dew. In rainy season an umbrella-

like roof without walls should be used for keeping the rain out. For the rest, the starlit blue canopy should form the roof so that whenever one opens one's eyes, he or she can feast them on the everchanging beautiful panorama of the heavens. He will never tire of the scene and it will not dazzle or hurt his eyes. On the contrary, it will have a soothing effect on him. To watch the different starry constellations floating in their majesty is a feast for the eyes. One who establishes contact with the stars as living witnesses to all his thoughts will never allow any evil or impurity to enter his mind and will enjoy peaceful, refreshing sleep.

Let us descend from the *akash* above to the *akash* within and immediately about us. Thus the skin has millions of pores. If we fill up the empty space within these pores, we simply die. Any clogging of the pores therefore must interfere with the even flow of health. Similarly we must not fill up the digestive tract with unnecessary foodstuffs. We should eat only as much as we need and no more. Often one overeats or eats indigestible things without being aware of it. An occasional fast, say once a week or once a fortnight, will enable one to keep the balance even. If one is unable to fast for the whole day, one should miss one or more meals during the day. Nature abhors a vacuum is only partially true. Nature constantly demands a vacuum. The vast space surrounding us is the standing testimony of the truth.

## SUN

As in the case of the other elements, which have been already dealt with, man cannot do without sunlight. The sun is the source of light and heat. If there was no sun, there would be neither light nor warmth. Unfortunately we do not make full use of sunlight and consequently we are unable to enjoy perfect health. Sunbath is as useful as ordinary water bath though the two cannot replace one another. In cases of debility and slow circulation, exposure of the uncovered body to the morning sun acts as an all-round general tonic and accelerates the metabolism. The morning sun has the largest amount of ultra-violet rays which are a most effective component of the sun's rays. If the patient feels cold, he should lie in the sun covered up and gradually expose more and more of his body as he gets used to it. One can also take the sunbath pacing up and down in the sun without any clothes on, in a private enclosure or in any other place away from public gaze. If such a place is not within easy reach, one can just cover up the private parts by tying up a piece of cloth or a *langoti* and expose the rest of his body to the sun.

I know of many persons who have been benefited by sunbaths. It is a well-known treatment for tuberculosis. Sunbaths or heliotherapy is no longer confined to the sphere of naturopathy. Orthodox medi-

cine has taken it up from naturopathy and developed it further. In cold countries, special glass buildings have been constructed under medical supervision, so that the glass lets in the sun's rays and at the same time protects patients against the cold

Sun treatment often results in the cure of intractable ulcers. To produce sweating, I have made patients lie in the sun at about 11 a.m., i.e. a little before midday. The experiment has been successful and the patients are soon bathed in sweat. In these cases the head should be protected from the sun by means of a cold mud poultice. Banana or any other leaves can be used to cover up the head and face and thus further help in keeping the head cool and well protected. The head should never be exposed to strong sunlight.



This fifth element is as important as the four already discussed in the foregoing pages. The human body which is composed of the five elements cannot do without any one of them. Therefore no one should be afraid of air. Generally, wherever our people go, they make devices to keep out the sun and the air and thus jeopardize their health. If one cultivates the habit of living in the open in the midst of plenty of fresh air, right from childhood, the body will become hardened and he or she will never suffer from cold in the head and the like ailments. I have said enough about the importance of fresh air in an earlier chapter. There is no occasion, therefore, to repeat here what has already been said.

